DC COMICS

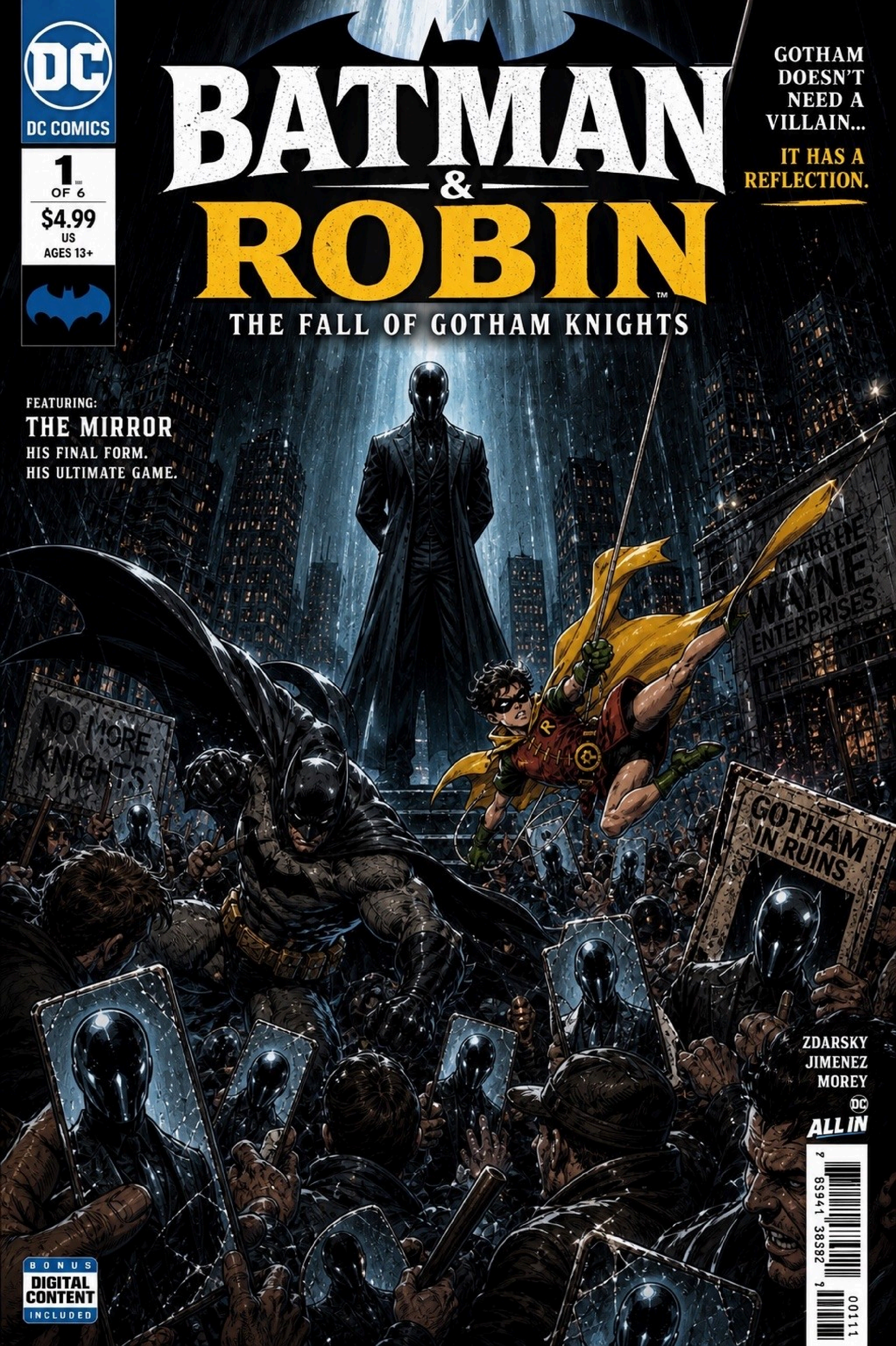
1 OF 6
$4.99 US
AGES 13+

BATMAN & ROBIN

THE FALL OF GOTHAM KNIGHTS

GOTHAM DOESN'T NEED A VILLAIN...
IT HAS A REFLECTION.

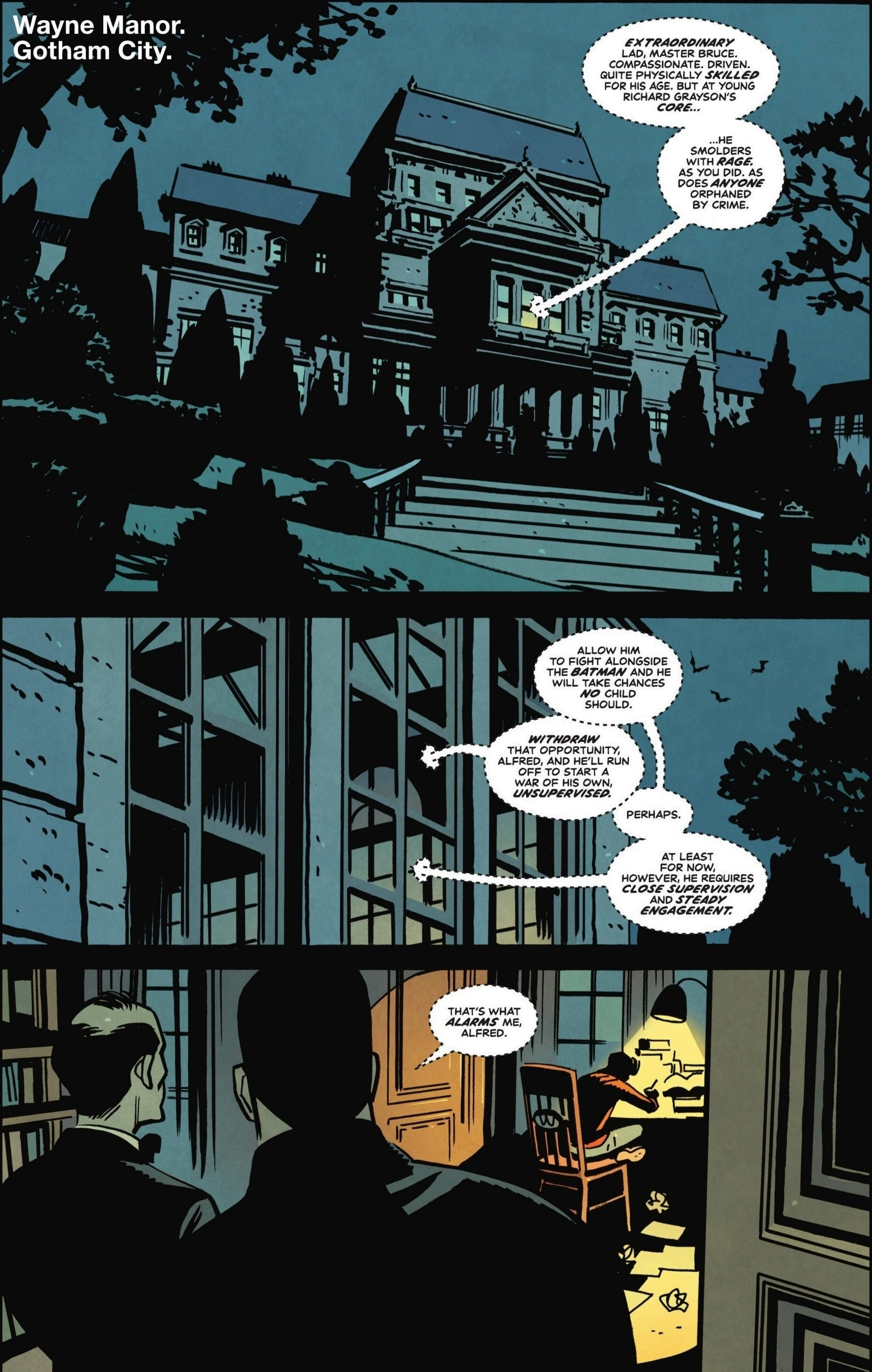
FEATURING:
THE MIRROR
HIS FINAL FORM.
HIS ULTIMATE GAME.

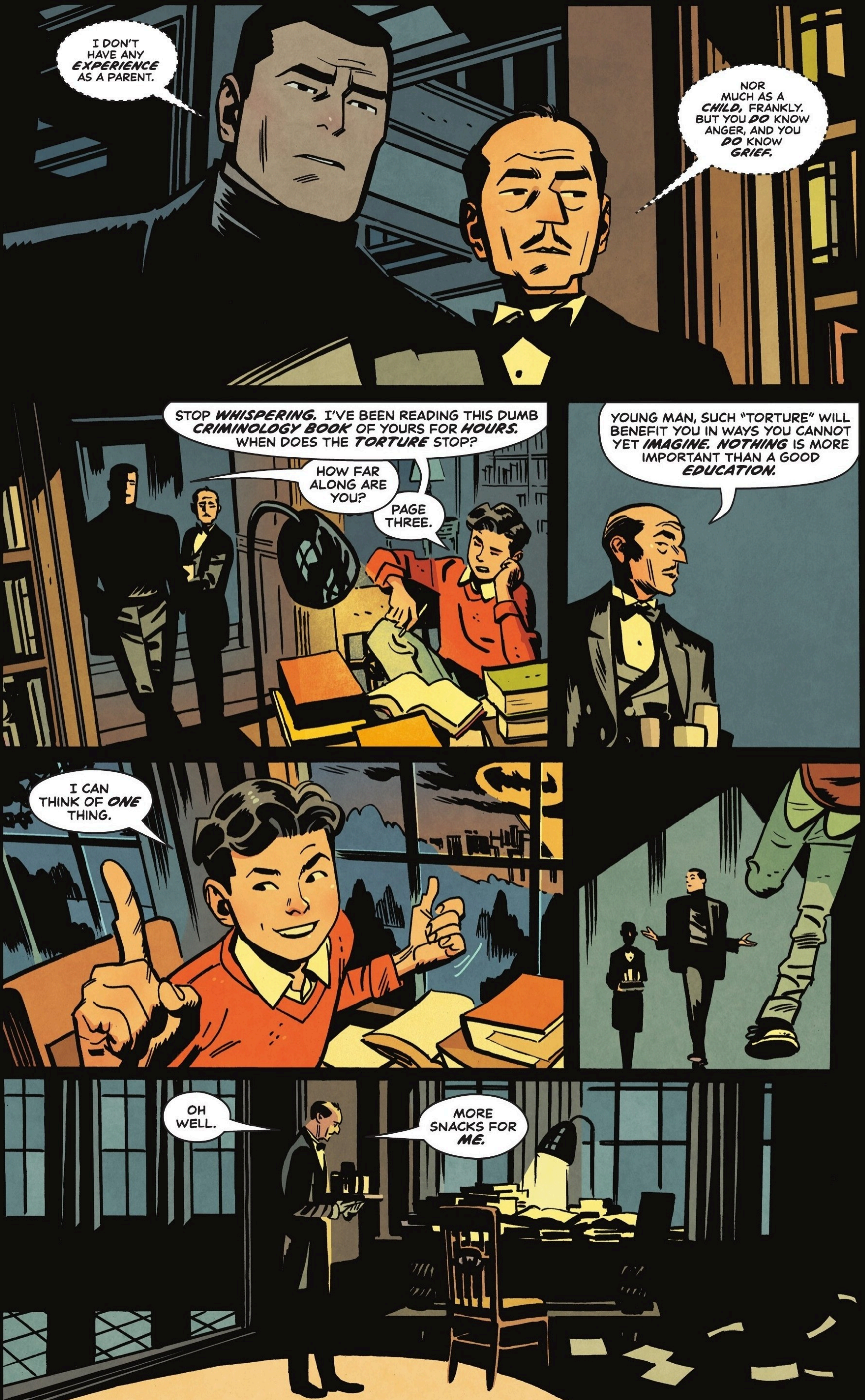

NO MORE KNIGHTS
WAYNE ENTERPRISES
GOTHAM IN RUINS

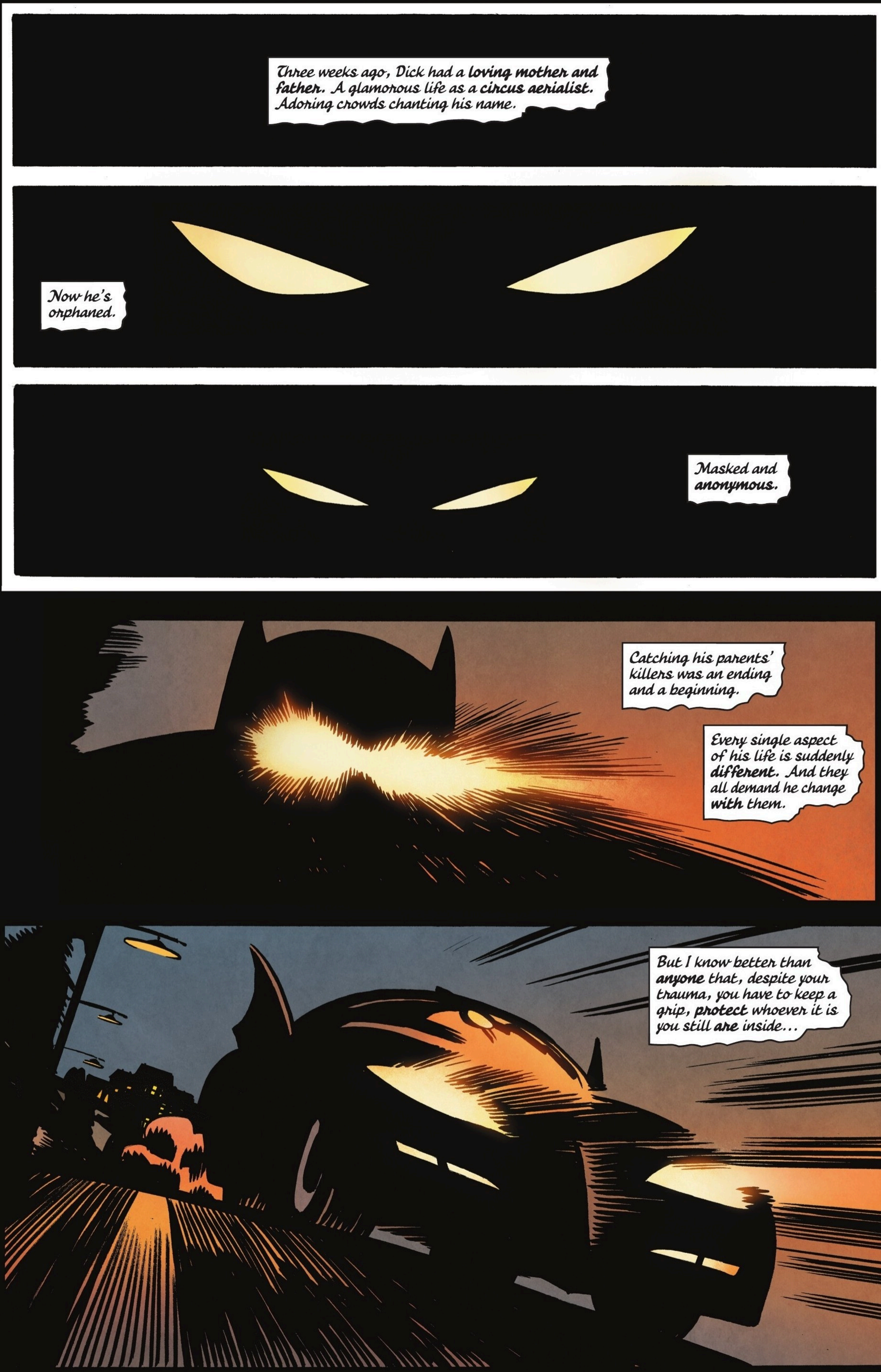
ZDARSKY
JIMENEZ
MOREY

ALL IN

BONUS DIGITAL CONTENT INCLUDED


Wayne Manor. Gotham City.
EXTRAORDINARY LAD, MASTER BRUCE. COMPASSIONATE. DRIVEN. QUITE PHYSICALLY SKILLED FOR HIS AGE. BUT AT YOUNG RICHARD GRAYSON'S CORE...
...HE SMOLDERS WITH RAGE. AS YOU DID. AS DOES ANYONE ORPHANED BY CRIME.
ALLOW HIM TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE BATMAN AND HE WILL TAKE CHANCES NO CHILD SHOULD.
WITHDRAW THAT OPPORTUNITY, ALFRED, AND HE'LL RUN OFF TO START A WAR OF HIS OWN, UNSUPERVISED.
PERHAPS.
AT LEAST FOR NOW, HOWEVER, HE REQUIRES CLOSE SUPERVISION AND STEADY ENGAGEMENT.
THAT'S WHAT ALARMS ME, ALFRED.


I DON'T HAVE ANY *EXPERIENCE* AS A PARENT.
NOR MUCH AS A *CHILD,* FRANKLY. BUT YOU *DO* KNOW ANGER, AND YOU *DO* KNOW *GRIEF.*
STOP *WHISPERING.* I'VE BEEN READING THIS DUMB *CRIMINOLOGY BOOK* OF YOURS FOR *HOURS.* WHEN DOES THE *TORTURE* STOP?
HOW FAR ALONG ARE YOU?
PAGE THREE.
YOUNG MAN, SUCH "TORTURE" WILL BENEFIT YOU IN WAYS YOU CANNOT YET *IMAGINE. NOTHING* IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A GOOD *EDUCATION.*
I CAN THINK OF *ONE* THING.
OH WELL.
MORE SNACKS FOR *ME.*


Three weeks ago, Dick had a **loving mother and father.** A glamorous life as a **circus aerialist.** Adoring crowds chanting his name.
Now he's orphaned.
Masked and **anonymous.**
Catching his parents' killers was an ending and a beginning.
Every single aspect of his life is suddenly **different.** And they all demand he change **with** them.
But I know better than **anyone** that, despite your trauma, you have to keep a grip, **protect** whoever it is you still **are** inside...

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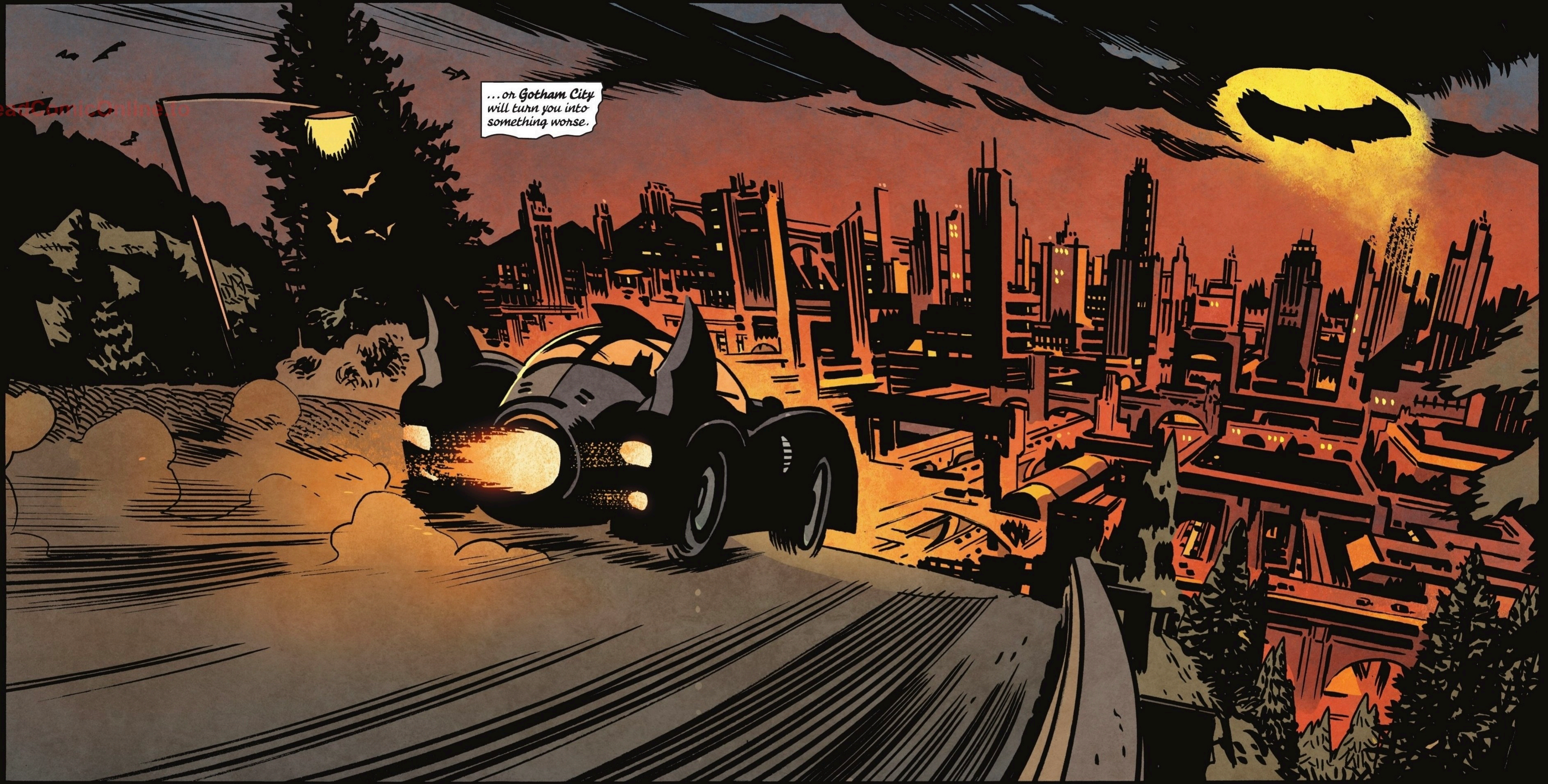
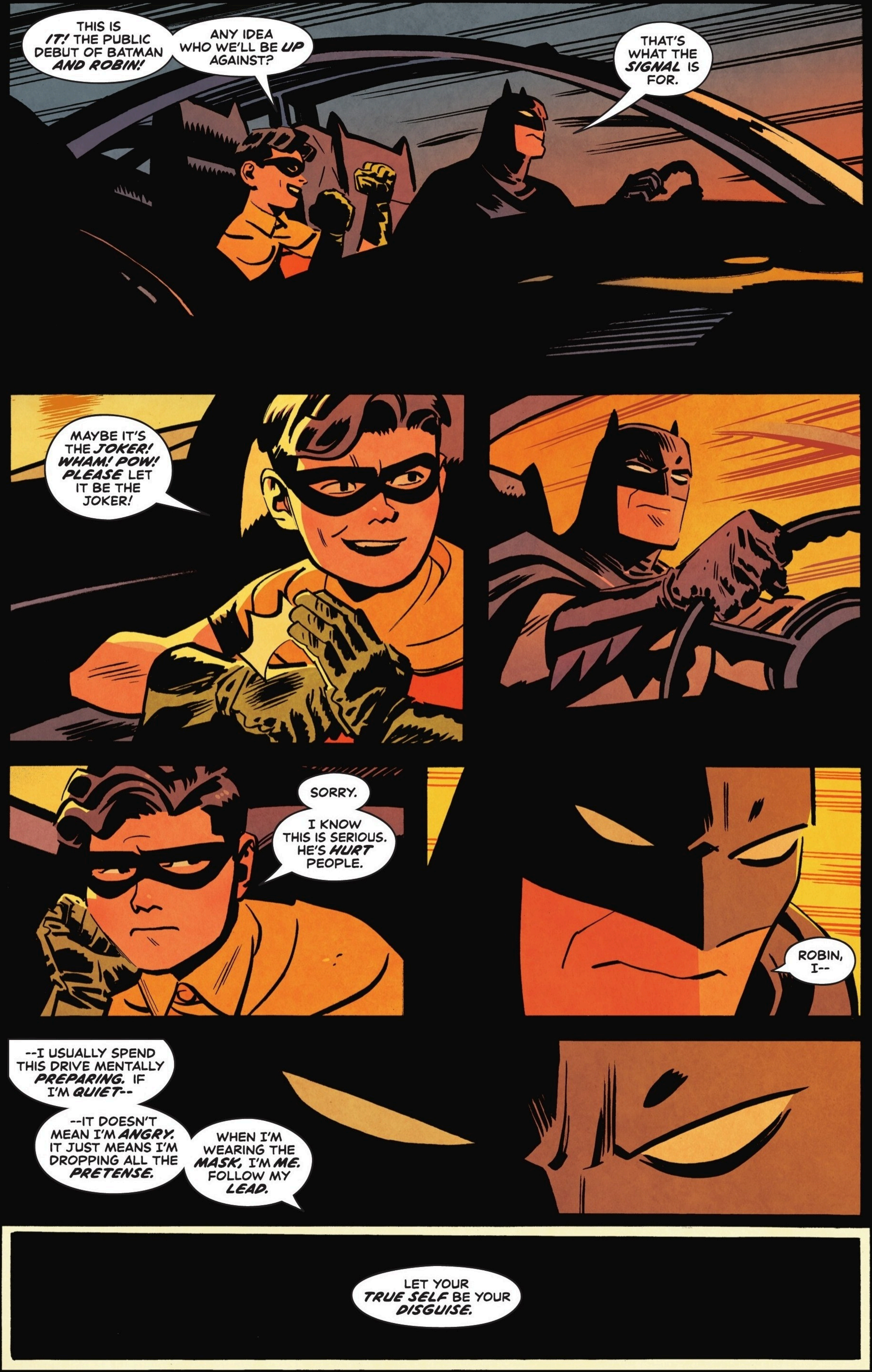
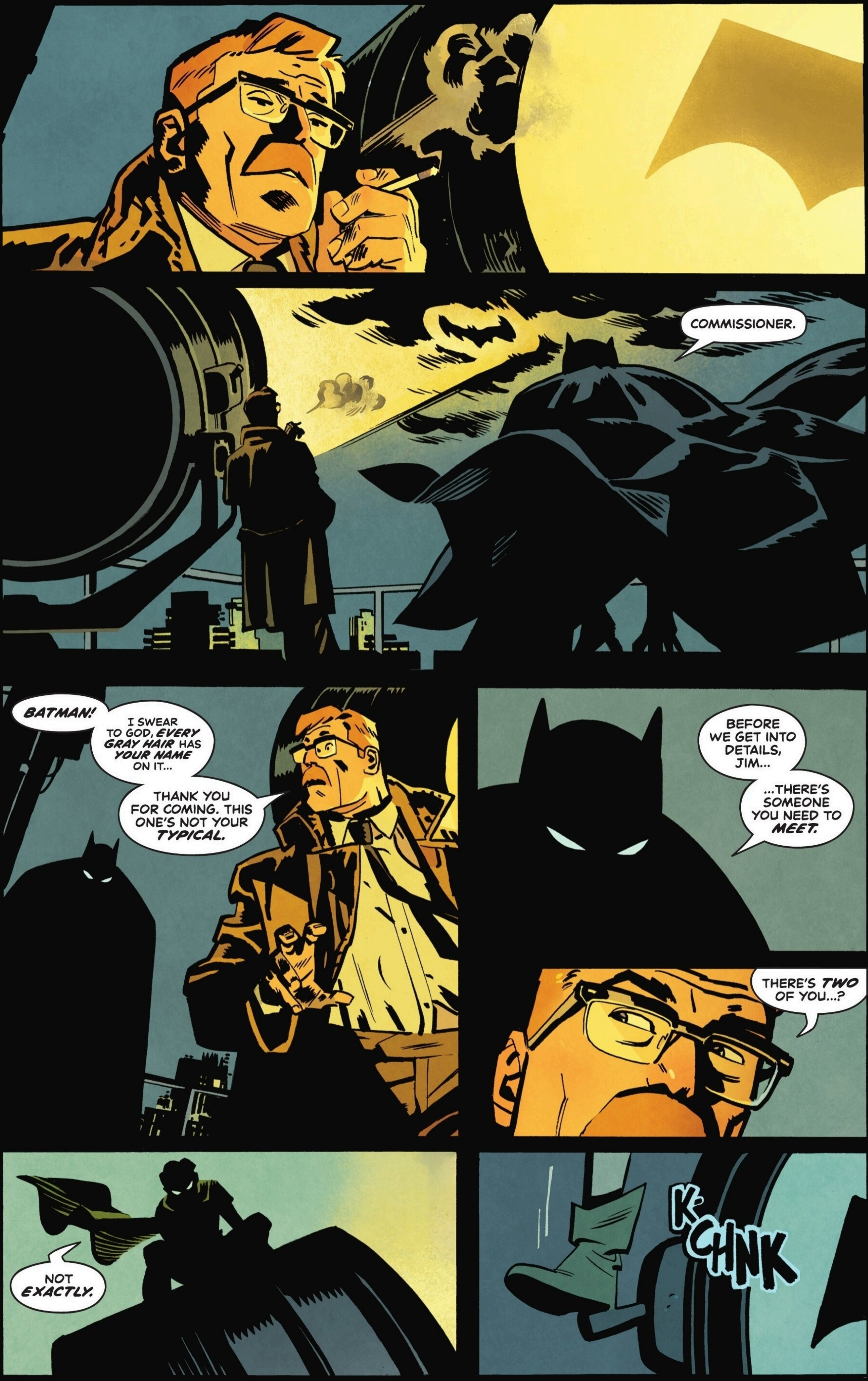
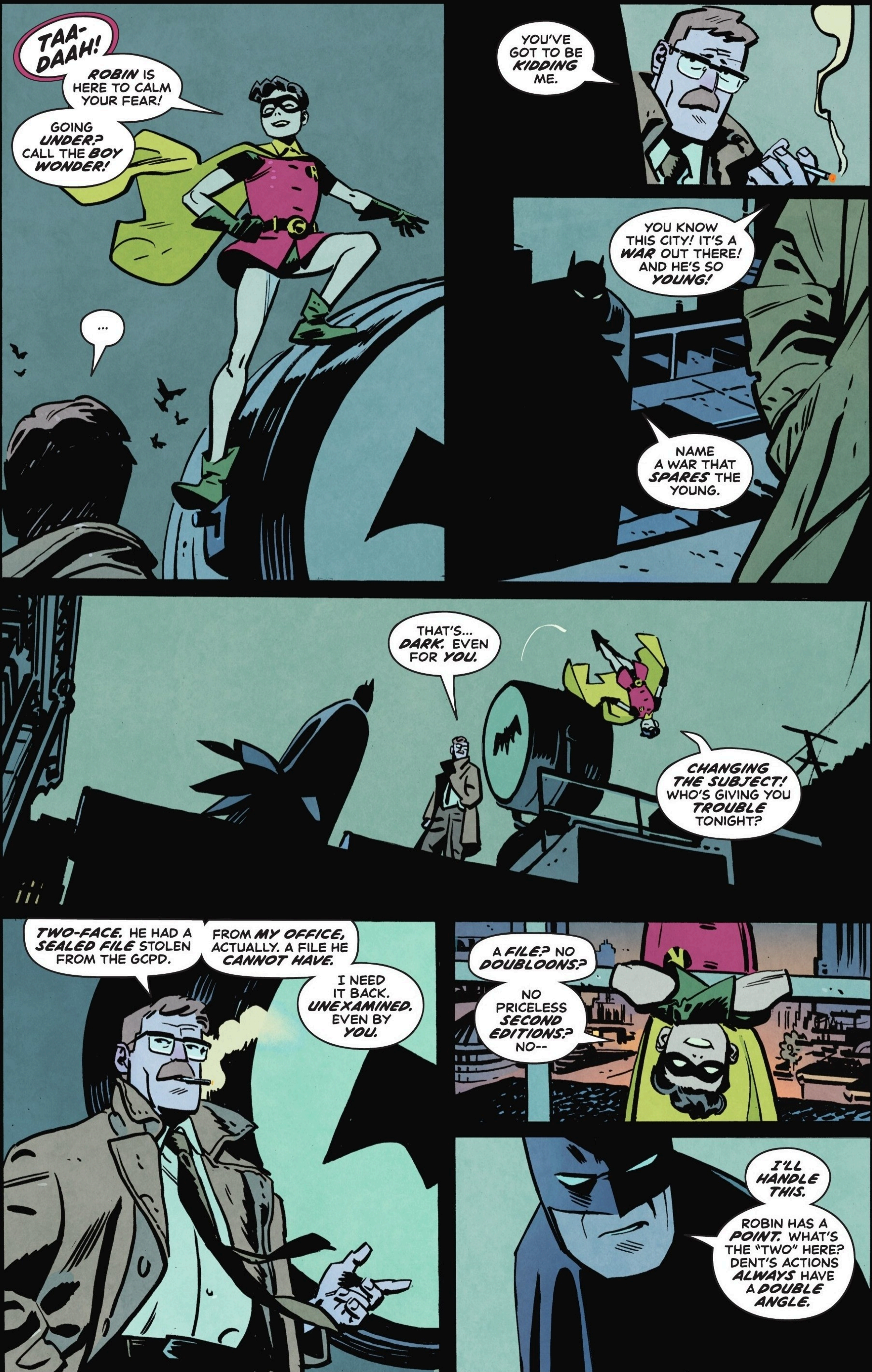
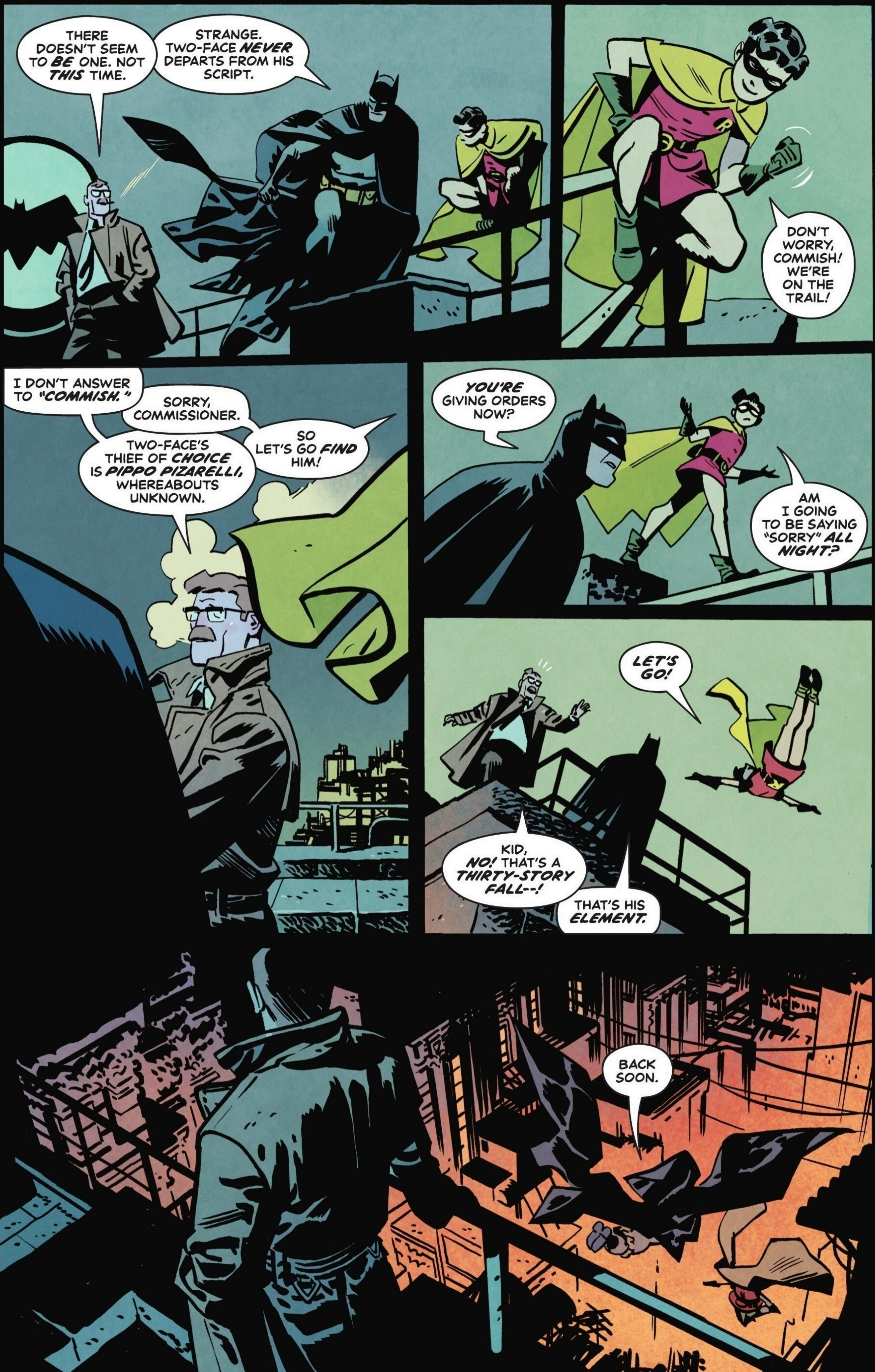
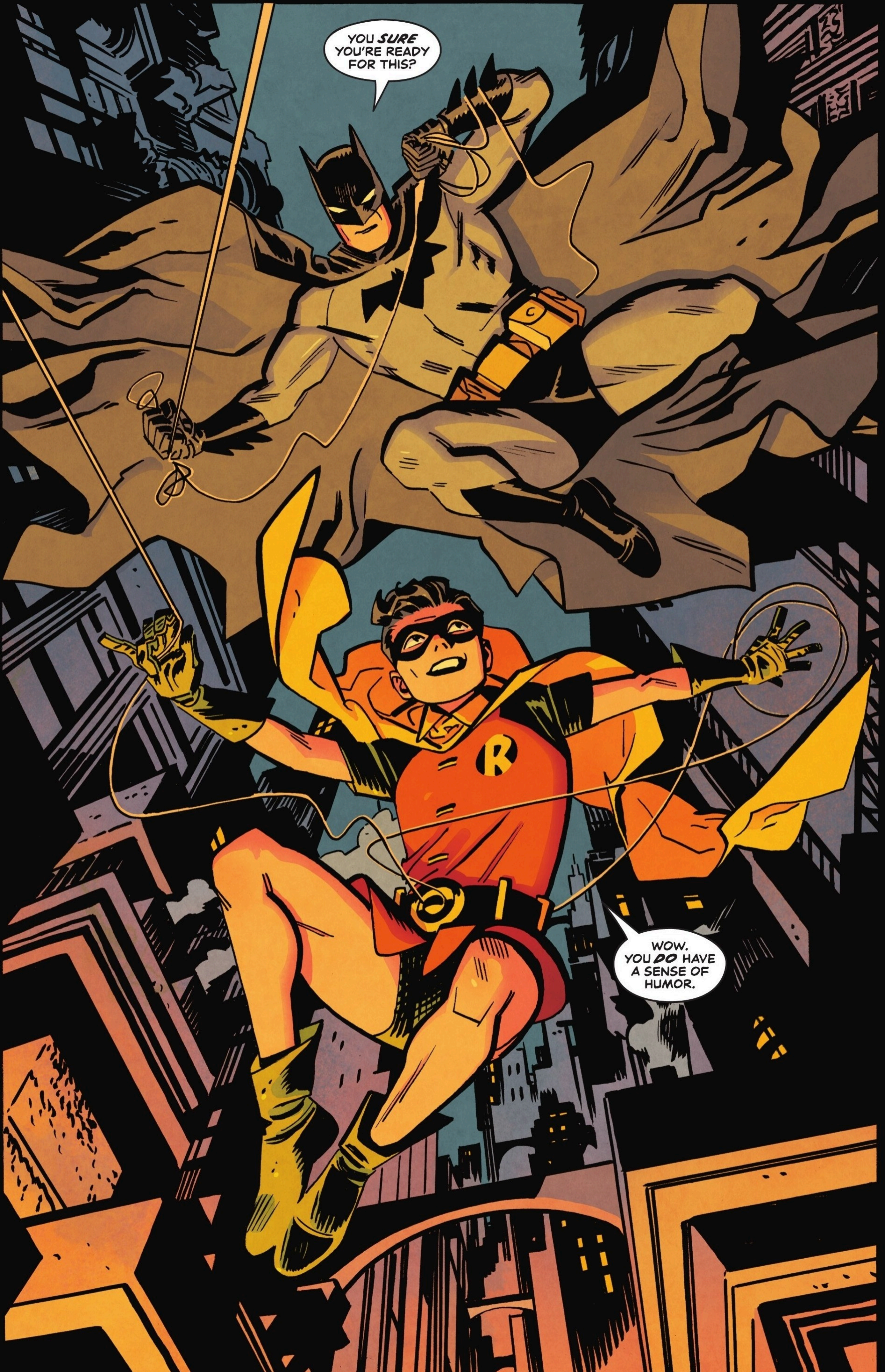

...or Gotham City will turn you into something worse.

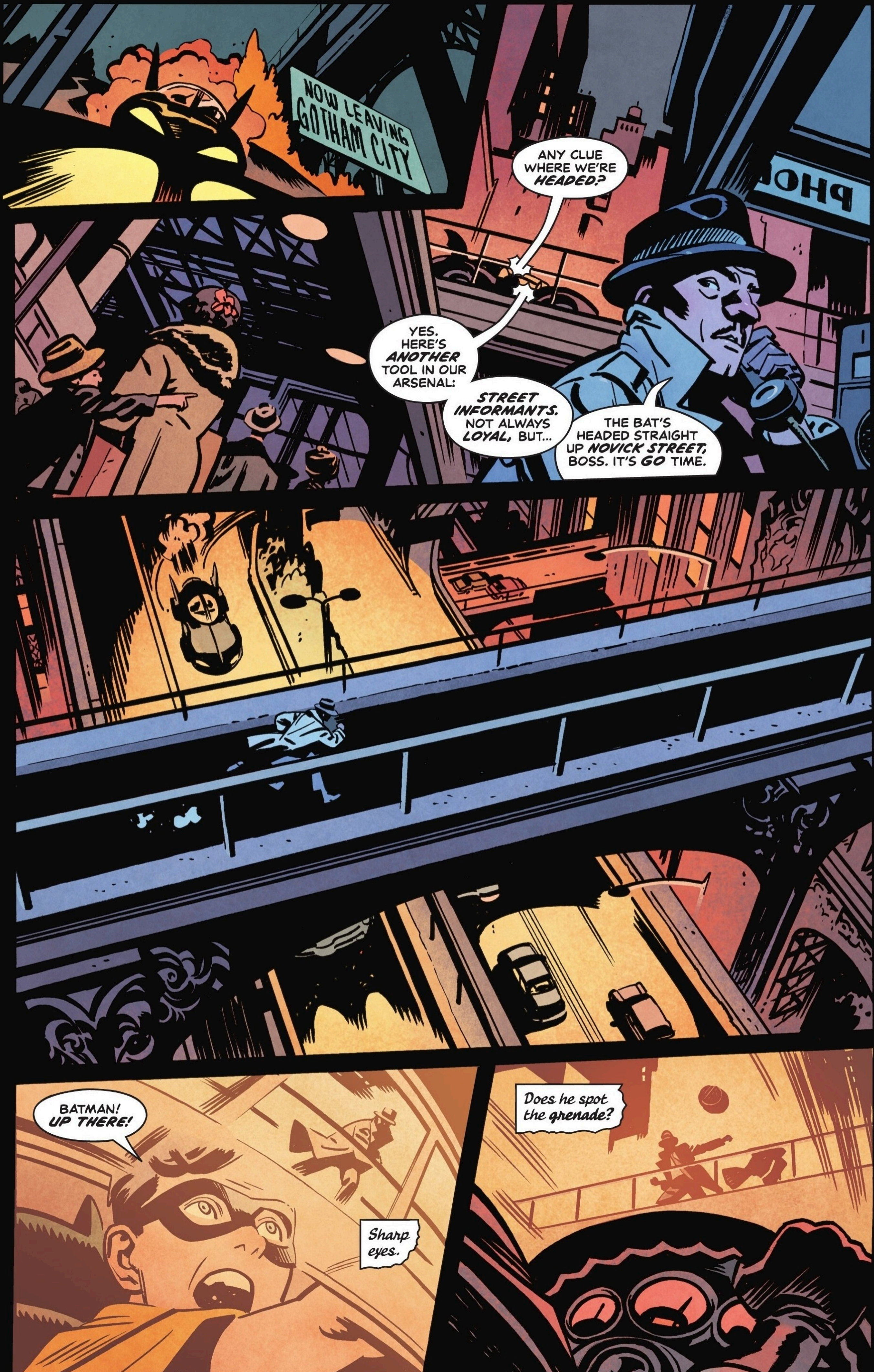

THIS IS *IT!* THE PUBLIC DEBUT OF BATMAN *AND ROBIN!*
ANY IDEA WHO WE'LL BE *UP* AGAINST?
THAT'S WHAT THE *SIGNAL* IS FOR.
MAYBE IT'S THE *JOKER! WHAM! POW! PLEASE* LET IT BE THE JOKER!
SORRY.
I KNOW THIS IS SERIOUS. HE'S *HURT* PEOPLE.
ROBIN, I--
--I USUALLY SPEND THIS DRIVE MENTALLY *PREPARING.* IF I'M *QUIET*--
--IT DOESN'T MEAN I'M *ANGRY.* IT JUST MEANS I'M DROPPING ALL THE *PRETENSE.*
WHEN I'M WEARING THE *MASK,* I'M *ME.* FOLLOW MY *LEAD.*
LET YOUR *TRUE SELF* BE YOUR *DISGUISE.*


COMMISSIONER.
BATMAN!
I SWEAR TO GOD, EVERY GRAY HAIR HAS YOUR NAME ON IT...
THANK YOU FOR COMING. THIS ONE'S NOT YOUR TYPICAL.
BEFORE WE GET INTO DETAILS, JIM...
...THERE'S SOMEONE YOU NEED TO MEET.
THERE'S TWO OF YOU...?
NOT EXACTLY.
K'CHNK


TAA-DAAH!
ROBIN IS HERE TO CALM YOUR FEAR!
GOING UNDER? CALL THE BOY WONDER!
...
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
YOU KNOW THIS CITY! IT'S A WAR OUT THERE! AND HE'S SO YOUNG!
NAME A WAR THAT SPARES THE YOUNG.
THAT'S... DARK. EVEN FOR YOU.
CHANGING THE SUBJECT! WHO'S GIVING YOU TROUBLE TONIGHT?
TWO-FACE. HE HAD A SEALED FILE STOLEN FROM THE GCPD.
FROM MY OFFICE, ACTUALLY. A FILE HE CANNOT HAVE.
I NEED IT BACK. UNEXAMINED. EVEN BY YOU.
A FILE? NO DOUBLOONS?
NO PRICELESS SECOND EDITIONS? NO--
I'LL HANDLE THIS.
ROBIN HAS A POINT. WHAT'S THE "TWO" HERE? DENT'S ACTIONS ALWAYS HAVE A DOUBLE ANGLE.


THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO *BE* ONE. NOT *THIS* TIME.
STRANGE. TWO-FACE *NEVER* DEPARTS FROM HIS SCRIPT.
DON'T WORRY, COMMISH! WE'RE ON THE TRAIL!
I DON'T ANSWER TO *"COMMISH."*
SORRY, COMMISSIONER.
TWO-FACE'S THIEF OF *CHOICE* IS *PIPPO PIZARELLI,* WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN.
SO LET'S GO *FIND* HIM!
YOU'RE GIVING ORDERS NOW?
AM I GOING TO BE SAYING "SORRY" *ALL NIGHT?*
LET'S GO!
KID, *NO!* THAT'S A *THIRTY-STORY FALL--!*
THAT'S HIS *ELEMENT.*
BACK SOON.


YOU *SURE* YOU'RE READY FOR THIS?
WOW. YOU *DO* HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR.


NOW LEAVING GOTHAM CITY
PHO
ANY CLUE WHERE WE'RE *HEADED?*
YES. HERE'S *ANOTHER* TOOL IN OUR ARSENAL:
STREET INFORMANTS. NOT ALWAYS *LOYAL,* BUT...
THE BAT'S HEADED STRAIGHT UP *NOVICK STREET,* BOSS. IT'S *GO* TIME.
BATMAN! *UP THERE!*
Sharp eyes.
Does he spot the grenade?

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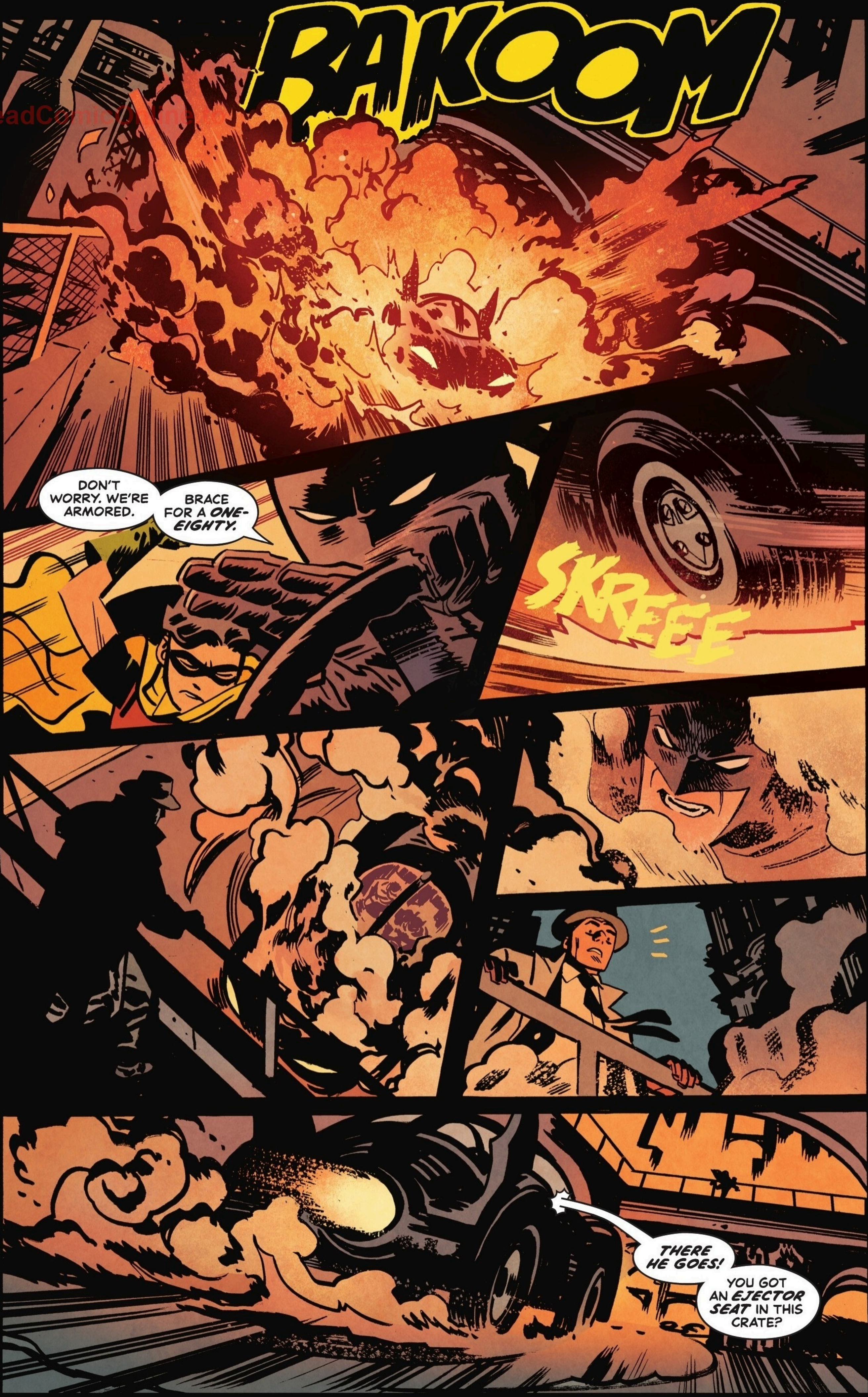
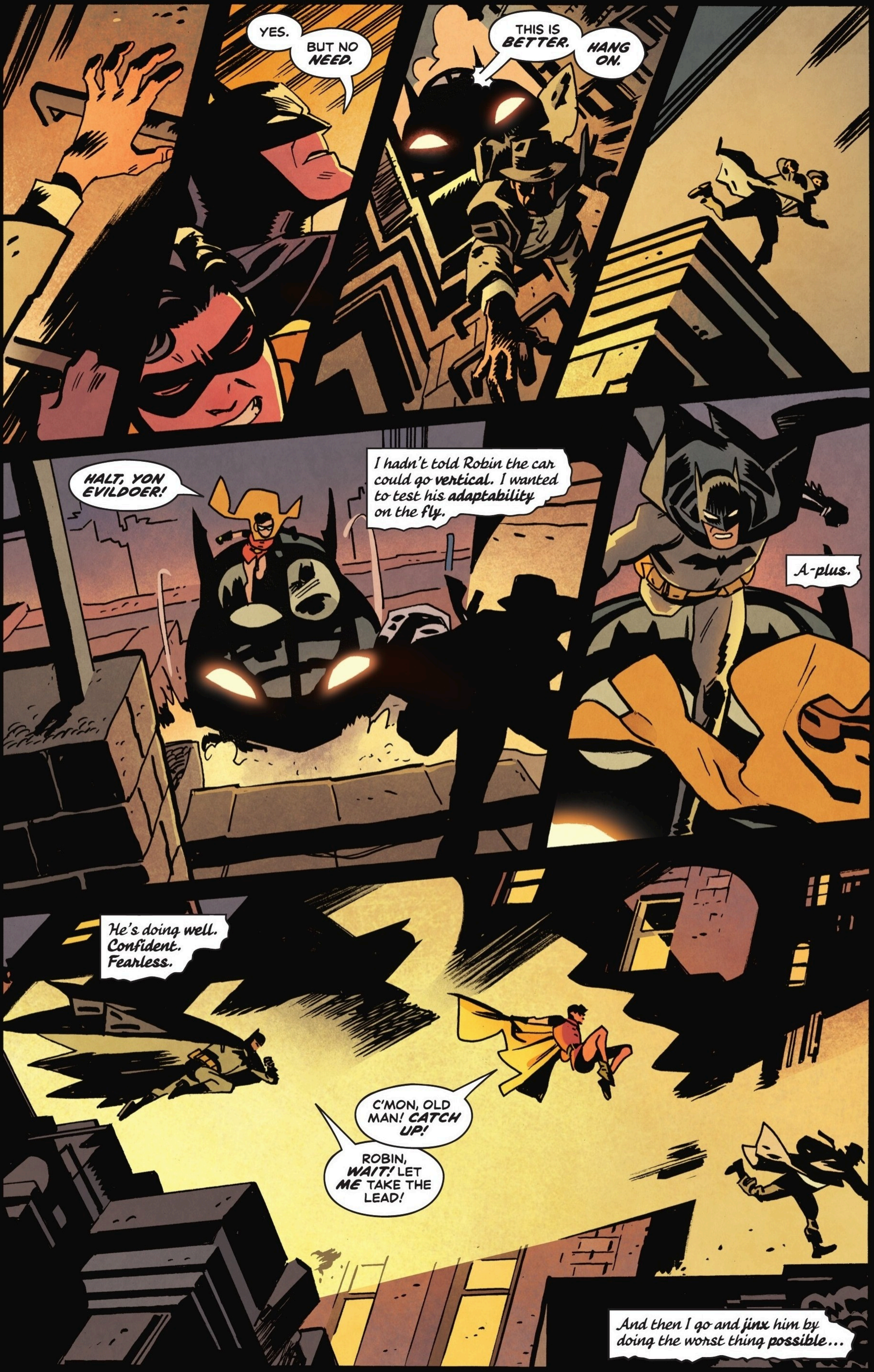

BAKOOM
DON'T WORRY. WE'RE ARMORED.
BRACE FOR A *ONE-EIGHTY.*
SKREEE
THERE HE GOES!
YOU GOT AN *EJECTOR SEAT* IN THIS CRATE?


YES.
BUT NO *NEED.*
THIS IS *BETTER.*
HANG ON.
HALT, YON EVILDOER!
I hadn't told Robin the car could go **vertical**. I wanted to test his **adaptability** on the fly.
A-plus.
He's doing well. **Confident. Fearless.**
C'MON, OLD MAN! *CATCH UP!*
ROBIN, *WAIT!* LET *ME* TAKE THE LEAD!
And then I go and **jinx** him by doing the worst thing **possible**...

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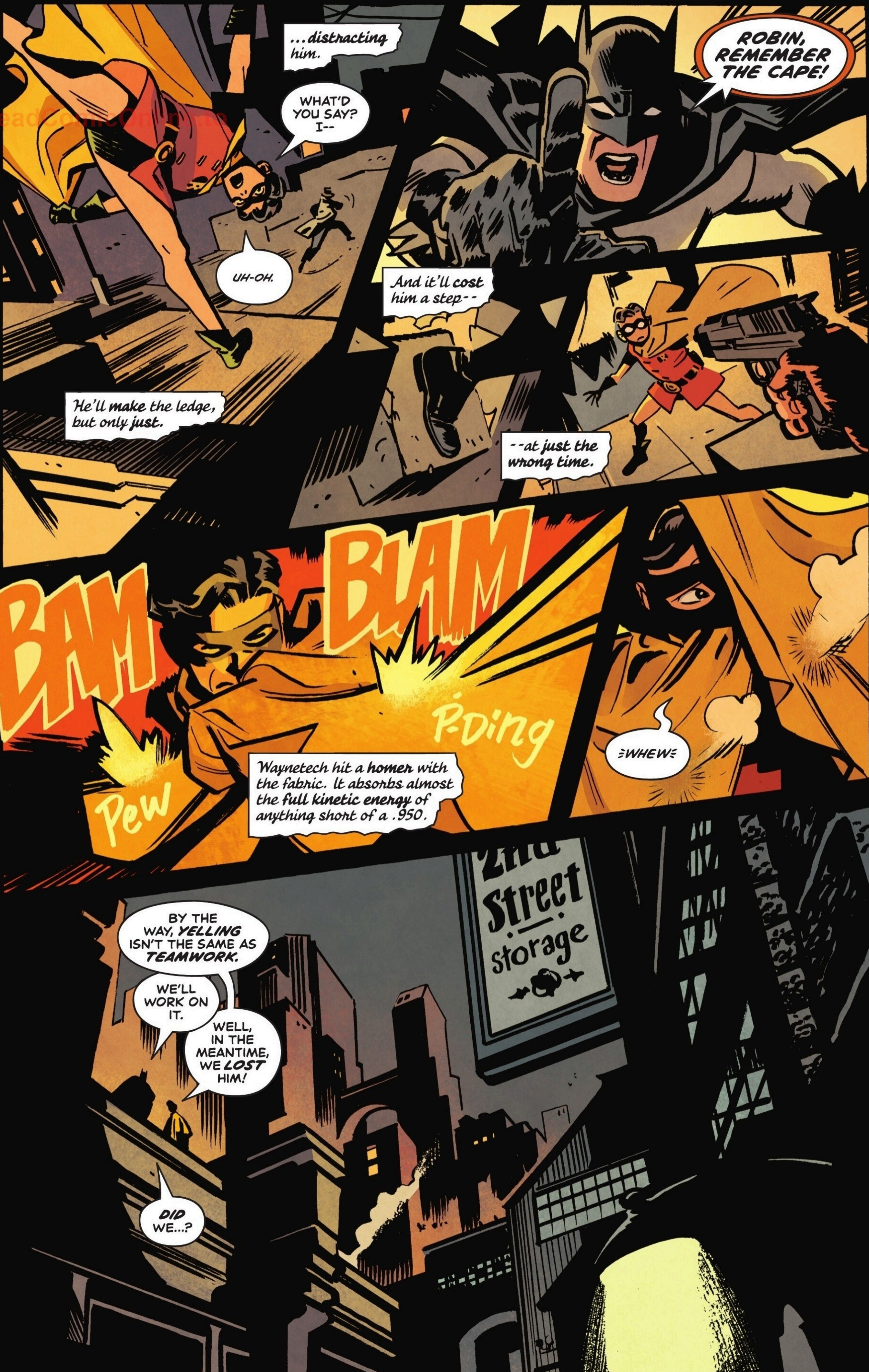
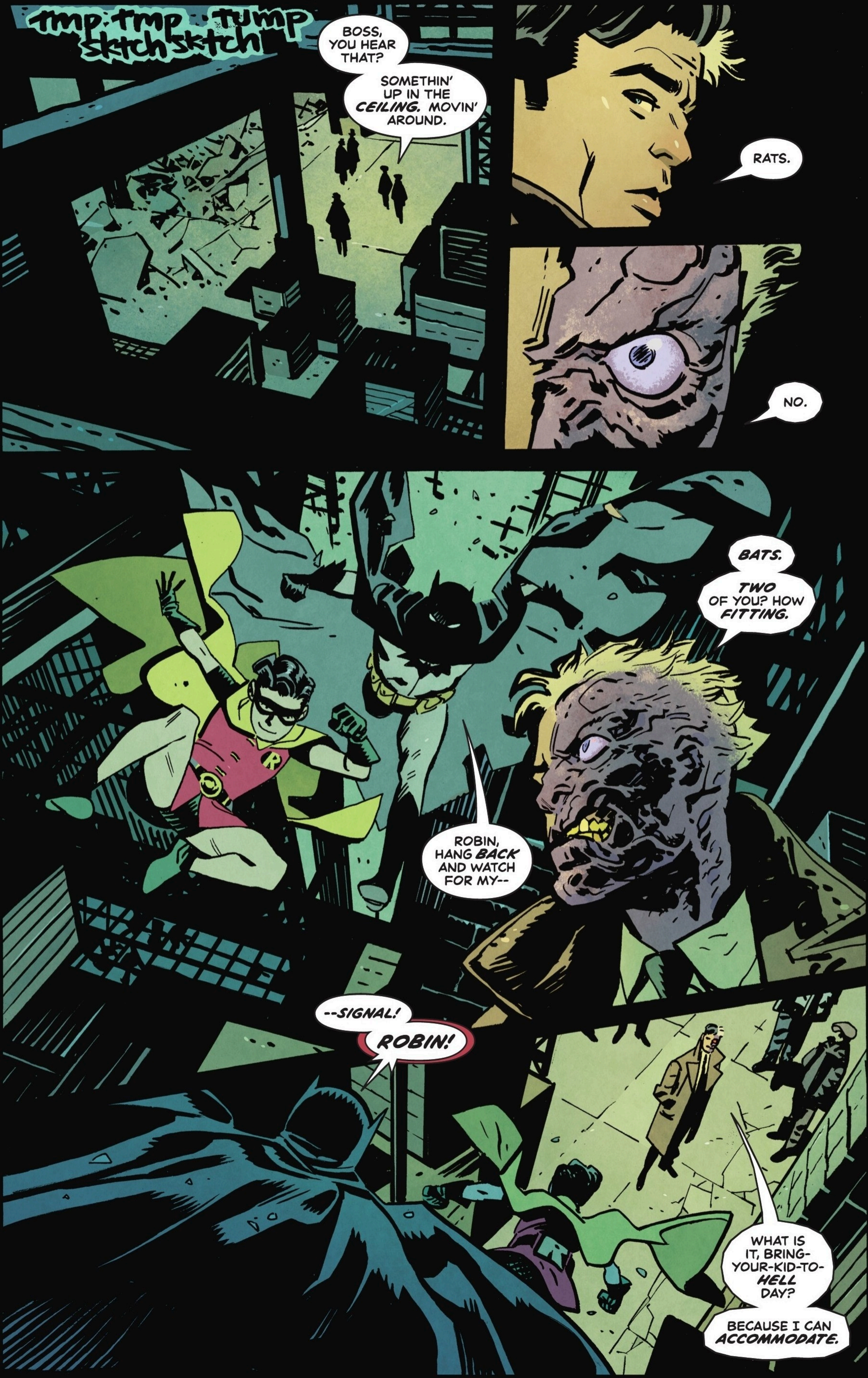
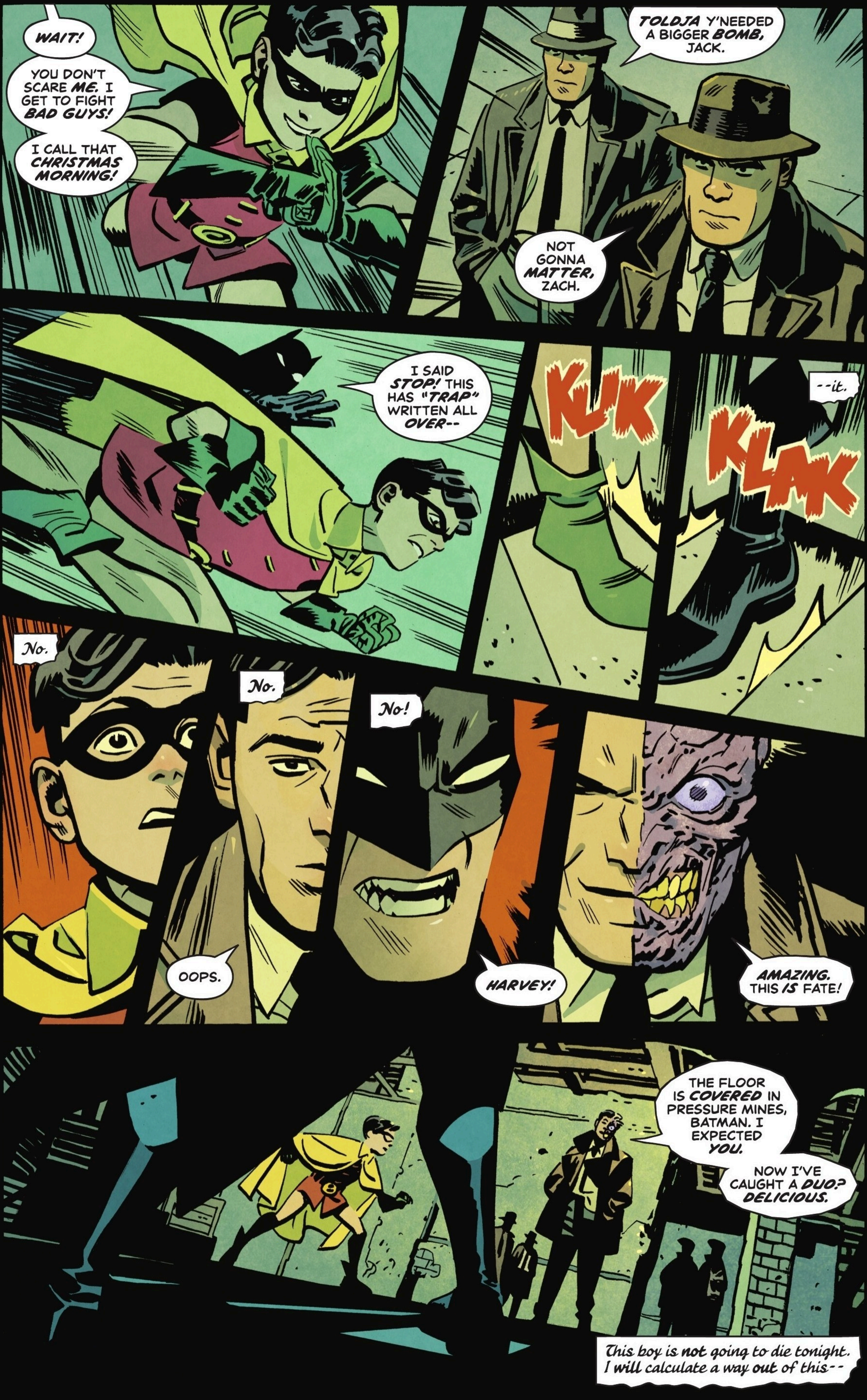
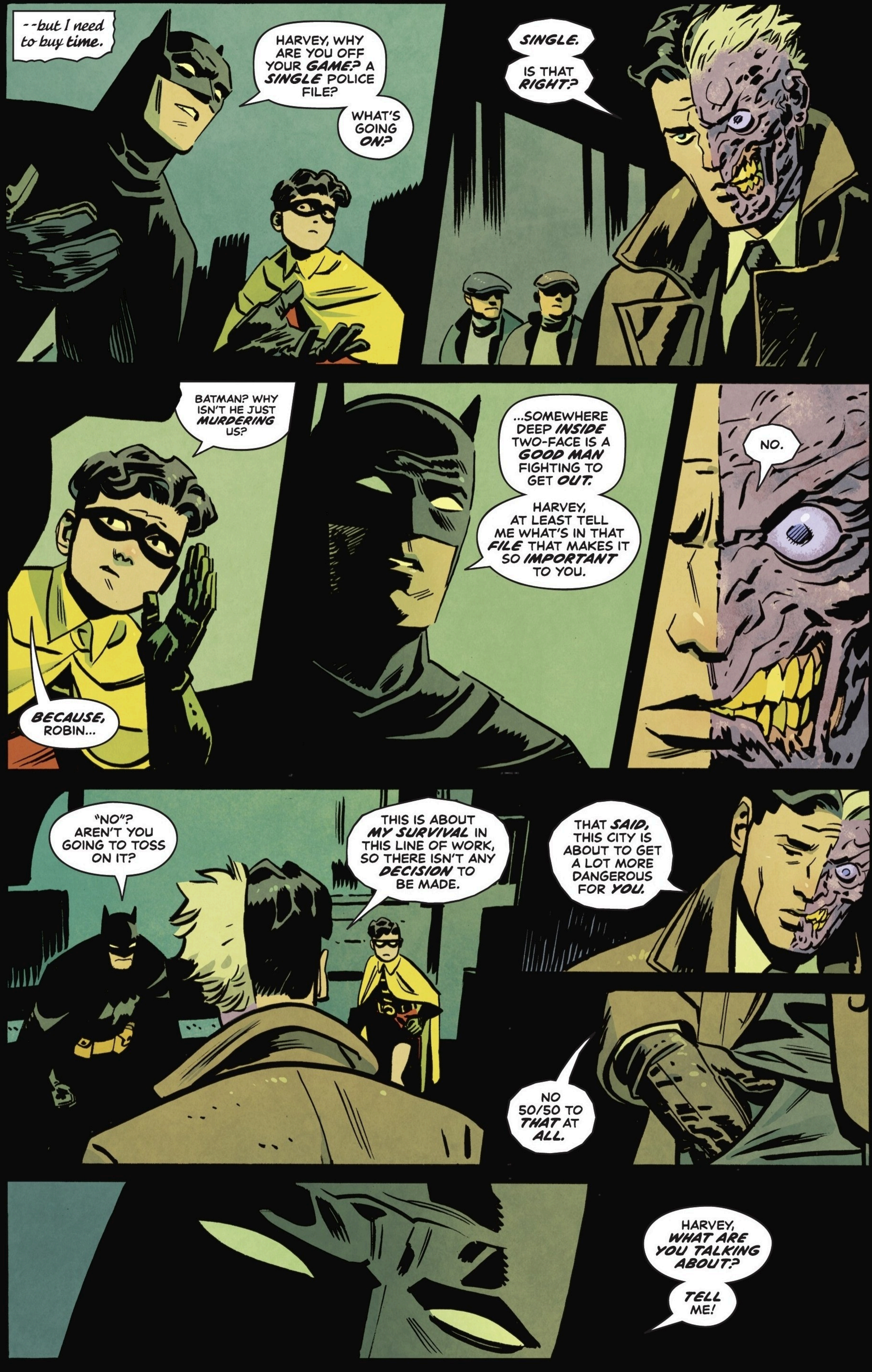
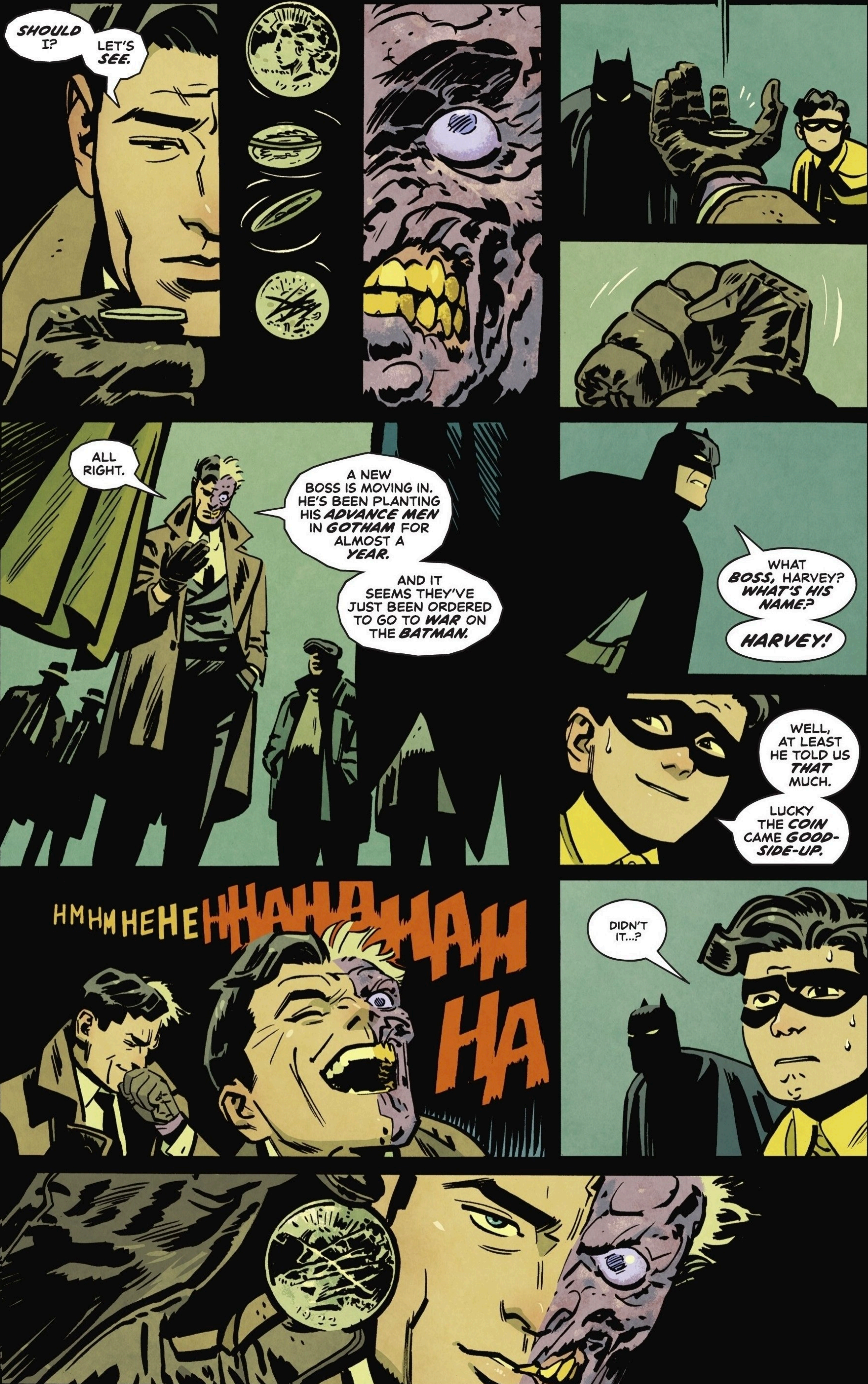
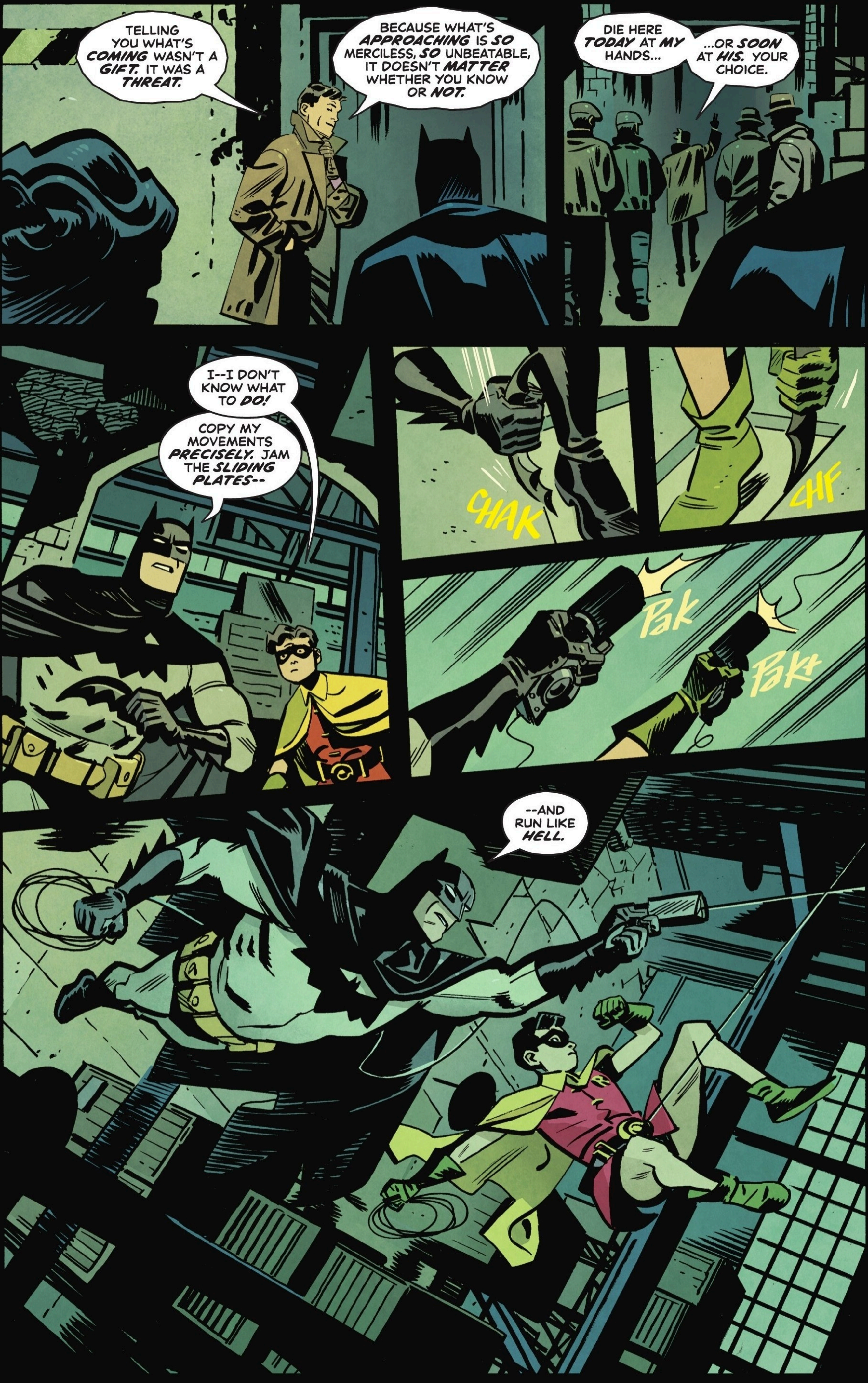

...distracting him.
WHAT'D YOU SAY? I--
UH-OH.
He'll make the ledge, but only just.
ROBIN, REMEMBER THE CAPE!
And it'll cost him a step--
--at just the wrong time.
BAM
BLAM
P-DING
Pew
Waynetech hit a homer with the fabric. It absorbs almost the full kinetic energy of anything short of a .950.
WHEW
2nd Street storage
BY THE WAY, YELLING ISN'T THE SAME AS TEAMWORK.
WE'LL WORK ON IT.
WELL, IN THE MEANTIME, WE LOST HIM!
DID WE...?

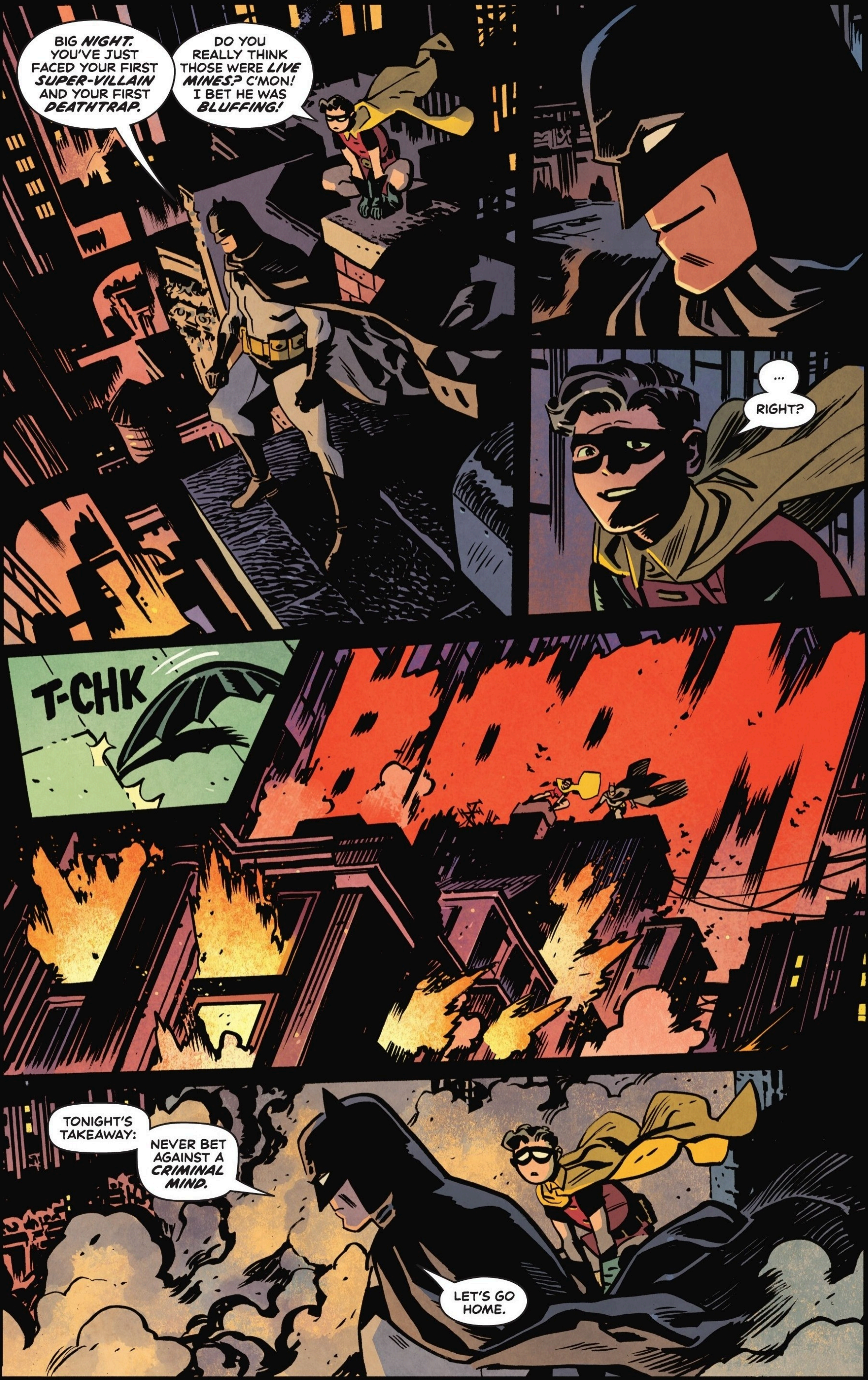

tmp tmp tump sktch sktch
BOSS, YOU HEAR THAT?
SOMETHIN' UP IN THE *CEILING.* MOVIN' AROUND.
RATS.
NO.
BATS.
TWO OF YOU? HOW *FITTING.*
ROBIN, HANG *BACK* AND WATCH FOR MY--
--*SIGNAL!*
ROBIN!
WHAT IS IT, BRING-YOUR-KID-TO-*HELL* DAY?
BECAUSE I CAN *ACCOMMODATE.*

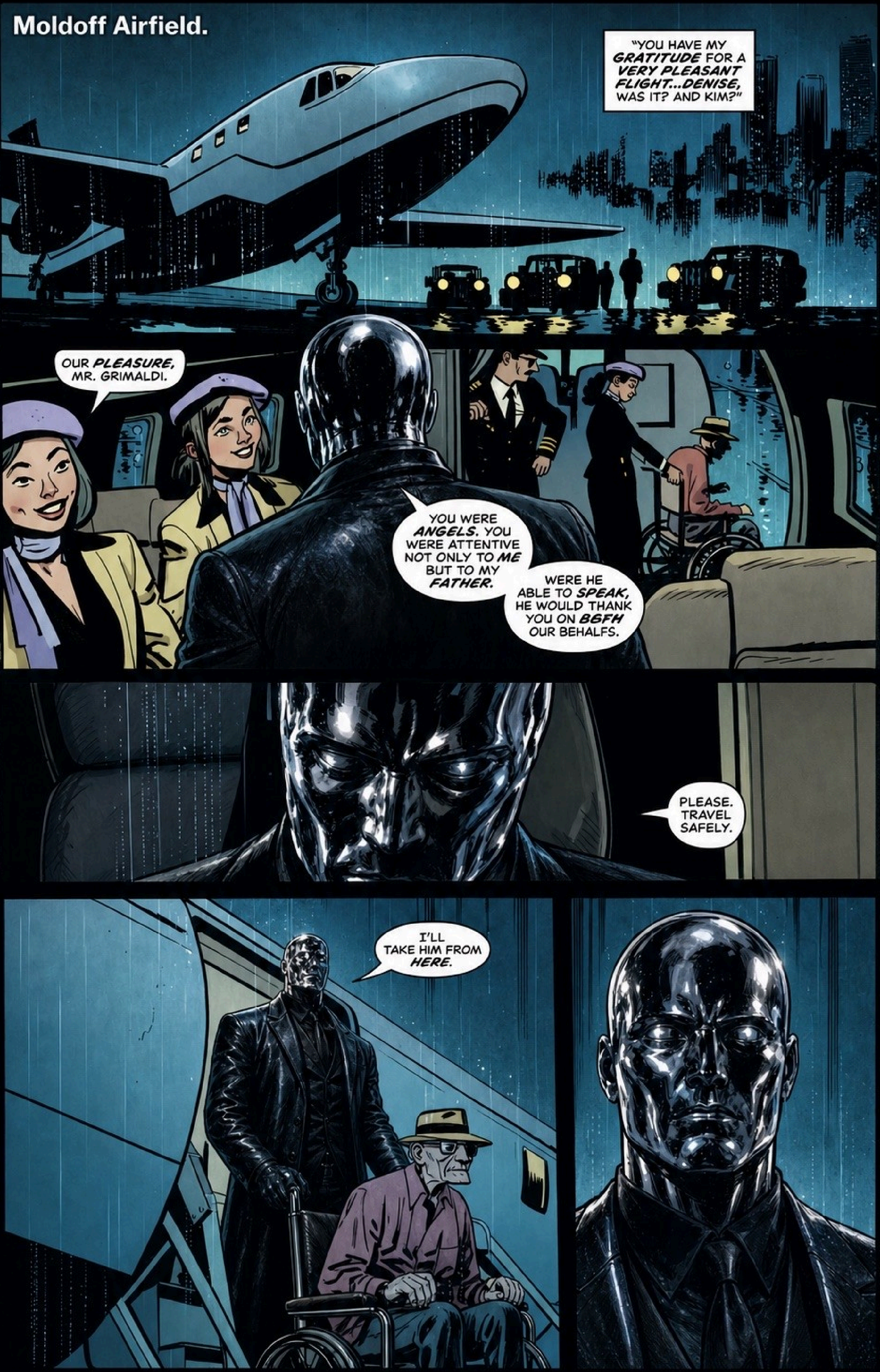

WAIT!
YOU DON'T SCARE ME. I GET TO FIGHT BAD GUYS!
I CALL THAT CHRISTMAS MORNING!
TOLDJA Y'NEEDED A BIGGER BOMB, JACK.
NOT GONNA MATTER, ZACH.
I SAID STOP! THIS HAS "TRAP" WRITTEN ALL OVER--
KUK
KLAK
--it.
No.
No.
No!
OOPS.
HARVEY!
AMAZING. THIS IS FATE!
THE FLOOR IS COVERED IN PRESSURE MINES, BATMAN. I EXPECTED YOU.
NOW I'VE CAUGHT A DUO? DELICIOUS.
This boy is not going to die tonight. I will calculate a way out of this--

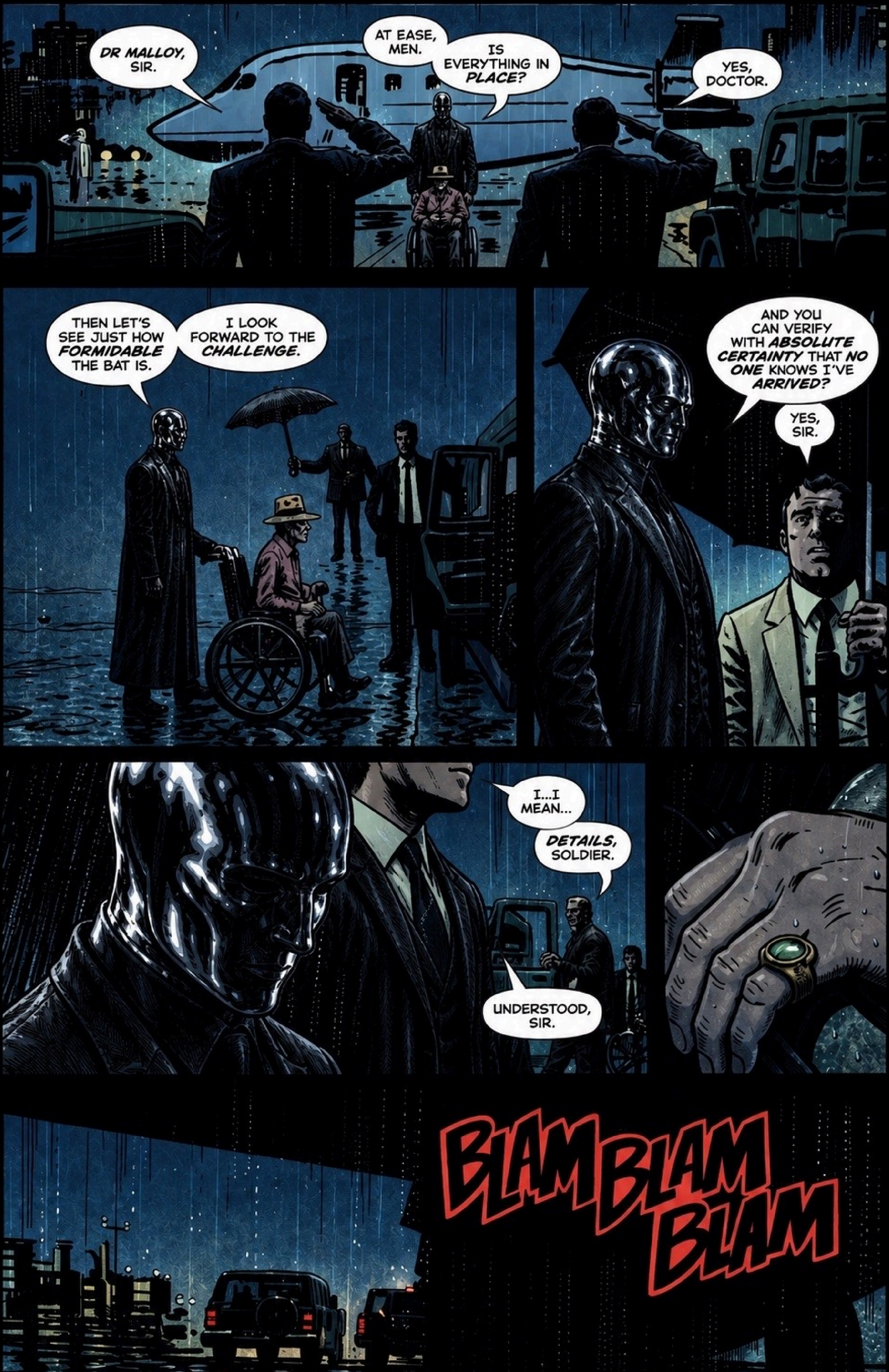

--but I need to buy *time.*
HARVEY, WHY ARE YOU OFF YOUR ***GAME?*** A ***SINGLE*** POLICE FILE?
WHAT'S GOING ***ON?***
SINGLE.
IS THAT ***RIGHT?***
BATMAN? WHY ISN'T HE JUST ***MURDERING*** US?
BECAUSE, ROBIN...
...SOMEWHERE DEEP ***INSIDE*** TWO-FACE IS A ***GOOD MAN*** FIGHTING TO GET ***OUT.***
HARVEY, AT LEAST TELL ME WHAT'S IN THAT ***FILE*** THAT MAKES IT SO ***IMPORTANT*** TO YOU.
NO.
"NO"? AREN'T YOU GOING TO TOSS ON IT?
THIS IS ABOUT ***MY SURVIVAL*** IN THIS LINE OF WORK, SO THERE ISN'T ANY ***DECISION*** TO BE MADE.
THAT ***SAID,*** THIS CITY IS ABOUT TO GET A LOT MORE DANGEROUS FOR ***YOU.***
NO 50/50 TO ***THAT*** AT ***ALL.***
HARVEY, ***WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?***
TELL ME!


SHOULD I?
LET'S SEE.
ALL RIGHT.
A NEW BOSS IS MOVING IN. HE'S BEEN PLANTING HIS ADVANCE MEN IN GOTHAM FOR ALMOST A YEAR.
AND IT SEEMS THEY'VE JUST BEEN ORDERED TO GO TO WAR ON THE BATMAN.
WHAT BOSS, HARVEY? WHAT'S HIS NAME?
HARVEY!
WELL, AT LEAST HE TOLD US THAT MUCH.
LUCKY THE COIN CAME GOOD-SIDE-UP.
HMHMHEHEHHAHAHAHAH HA
DIDN'T IT...?

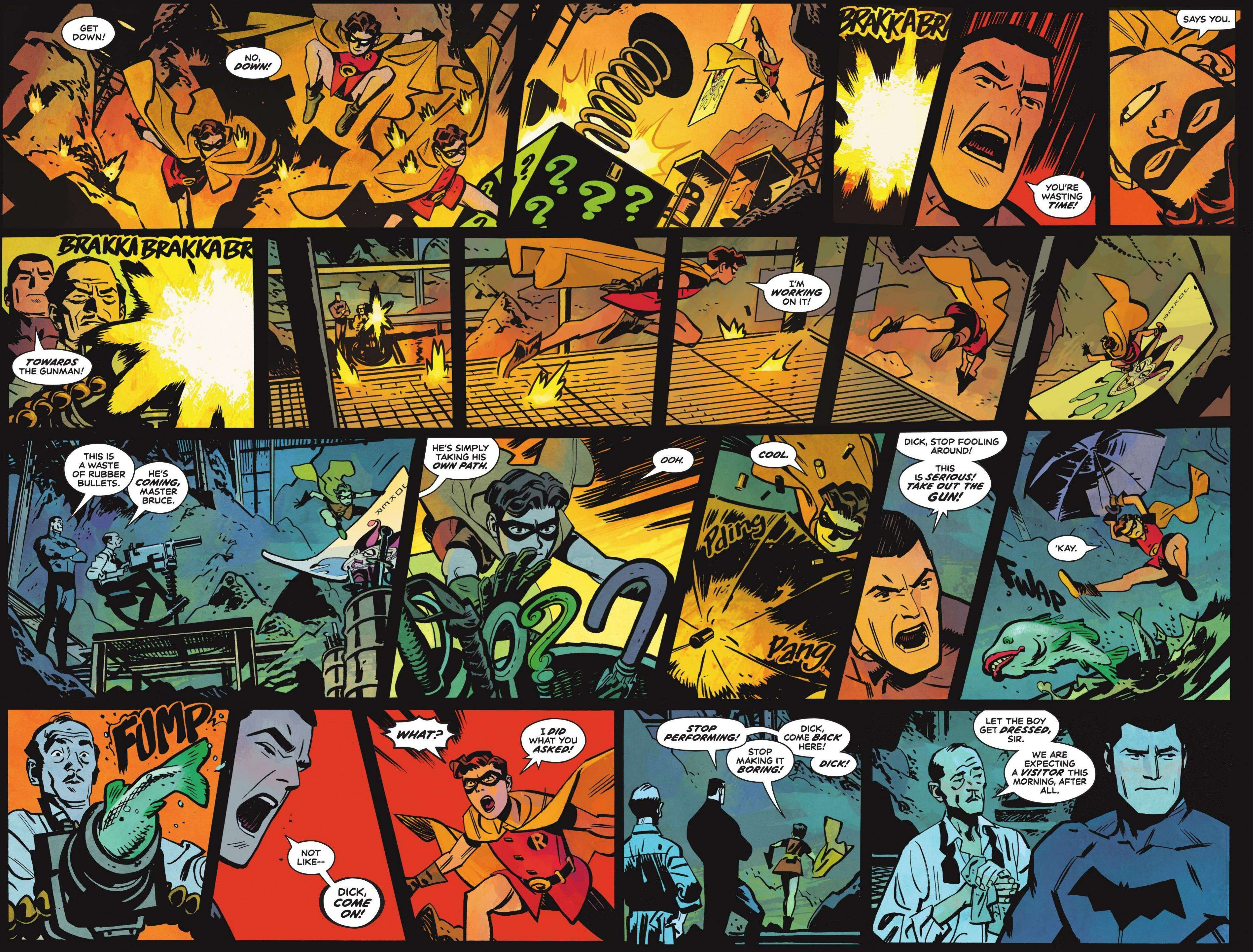

TELLING YOU WHAT'S COMING WASN'T A GIFT. IT WAS A THREAT.
BECAUSE WHAT'S APPROACHING IS SO MERCILESS, SO UNBEATABLE, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU KNOW OR NOT.
DIE HERE TODAY AT MY HANDS...
...OR SOON AT HIS. YOUR CHOICE.
I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
COPY MY MOVEMENTS PRECISELY. JAM THE SLIDING PLATES--
CHAK
CHF
Pak
Pakt
--AND RUN LIKE HELL.


BIG *NIGHT.* YOU'VE JUST FACED YOUR FIRST *SUPER-VILLAIN* AND YOUR FIRST *DEATHTRAP.*
DO YOU REALLY THINK THOSE WERE *LIVE MINES?* C'MON! I BET HE WAS *BLUFFING!*
...
RIGHT?
T-CHK
BOOM
TONIGHT'S TAKEAWAY:
NEVER BET AGAINST A *CRIMINAL MIND.*
LET'S GO HOME.


Moldoff Airfield.
"YOU HAVE MY *GRATITUDE* FOR A *VERY PLEASANT FLIGHT...DENISE,* WAS IT? AND KIM?"
OUR *PLEASURE,* MR. GRIMALDI.
YOU WERE *ANGELS.* YOU WERE ATTENTIVE NOT ONLY TO *ME* BUT TO MY *FATHER.*
WERE HE ABLE TO *SPEAK,* HE WOULD THANK YOU ON *BOTH* OUR BEHALFS.
PLEASE. TRAVEL SAFELY.
I'LL TAKE HIM FROM *HERE.*


DR MALLOY, SIR.
AT EASE, MEN.
IS EVERYTHING IN PLACE?
YES, DOCTOR.
THEN LET'S SEE JUST HOW FORMIDABLE THE BAT IS.
I LOOK FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGE.
AND YOU CAN VERIFY WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT NO ONE KNOWS I'VE ARRIVED?
YES, SIR.
I...I MEAN...
DETAILS, SOLDIER.
UNDERSTOOD, SIR.
BLAM BLAM BLAM

CHAPTER 2


GET DOWN!
NO, *DOWN!*
BRAKKABR
YOU'RE WASTING *TIME!*
SAYS YOU.
BRAKKABRAKKABR
TOWARDS THE GUNMAN!
I'M *WORKING* ON IT!
JOKER
THIS IS A WASTE OF RUBBER BULLETS.
HE'S *COMING,* MASTER BRUCE.
HE'S SIMPLY TAKING HIS *OWN PATH.*
OOH.
COOL.
Pding
Pang
DICK, STOP FOOLING AROUND!
THIS IS *SERIOUS! TAKE OUT THE GUN!*
'KAY.
FWAP
FUMP
NOT LIKE--
DICK, *COME ON!*
WHAT?
I *DID* WHAT YOU *ASKED!*
STOP PERFORMING!
DICK, COME *BACK* HERE!
STOP MAKING IT *BORING!*
DICK!
LET THE BOY GET *DRESSED,* SIR.
WE ARE EXPECTING A *VISITOR* THIS MORNING, AFTER ALL.

...SO AS YOU CAN SEE, MS. LYN, DICK WANTS FOR *NOTHING* UNDER THIS ROOF.
ALFRED ISN'T MERELY A *HOUSEKEEPER.* HE'S TRAINED AS A *MEDIC,* A *NUTRITIONIST,* AND A *MASTER CHEF.*
HE PLATES AN *EXCELLENT* EGGS FLORENTINE, IF WE MAY OFFER.
I'VE EATEN, THANK YOU.
HE *DOES* SEEM TO JUGGLE QUITE A FEW PLATES.
YOU HAVE *NO IDEA.*
JUST HOW MUCH TIME DO DICK AND MR. PENNYWORTH SPEND TOGETHER?
THAT'S YOUR WAY OF ASKING ME, "DO YOU JUST HAND THE BOY *OFF?*" AND THE ANSWER IS *NO.*
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL IMPROVEMENT... VARIOUS VOLUNTEER SERVICES AROUND GOTHAM...
I *KNOW* HOW *ANGRY* A LOSS LIKE HIS CAN MAKE SOMEONE. I HELP HIM *FOCUS* THAT ANGER INTO *PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.*
POLO?
YOU *WOUND* ME.
NO, I LEAVE THE *YACHTING* AND *BIG GAME HUNTING* TO THE *LAZIER* OF THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE. NOT ALL STEREOTYPES ARE *ACCURATE.*
ANY *OTHER* QUESTIONS I CAN ANSWER?
MR. WAYNE--
PLEASE. CALL ME *BRUCE.*
I--
--BRUCE, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO INVITED THIS INTERROGATION BY FILING AS A *BACHELOR GUARDIAN* WITH A REPUTATION FOR...*HEAVY SOCIALIZING.*
MS. LYN, I TAKE THIS *VERY* SERIOUSLY.
YOU HAVE MY WORD AS A *WAYNE* AND AS A *TRAUMA SURVIVOR* THAT THE BOY IS *AT NO RISK* IN THIS HOUSE.
ASK HIM *YOURSELF.* HE'S *WAITING* FOR YOU IN THE *DEN.*

HI!
NO, PLEASE! HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE UNTIL...
TA-DA!
SORRY. YOU CAN TAKE THE KID OUTTA THE CIRCUS, BUT NOT SO MUCH VICE VERSA...

IS THIS *TYPICAL* BEHAVIOR?
I'M AS SHOCKED AS *YOU.* AND, NO, I DO *NOT* APPROVE.
I SHOULD *HOPE* NOT.
REGARDLESS OF DICK'S BACKGROUND, IT'S *BEST* HE KEEPS BOTH FEET ON THE *GROUND* FOR NOW.
WE'LL BEHAVE. *BOTH* OF US.
ISN'T THAT *RIGHT,* DICK?
APPARENTLY.
SIGH
THEY'LL LOVE *THIS* BACK AT THE OFFICE...
I WILL *REMIND* YOU THIS IS THE FIRST OF *MANY* CHECK-INS I'LL BE MAKING.
NOT ALL OF THEM *ANNOUNCED.*
I *WILL* BE KEEPING A *CLOSE EYE* ON THE *BOTH* OF YOU...
...*MIS*-TER WAYNE.

EXCELLENT.
CASSAVA BETTER THAN *YOU* EVER MADE, FATHER.
BACK WHEN YOU *COULD.*
DO YOU MISS *COOKING,* FATHER?
OR *SOLID FOOD,* YOU OLD--?
?
LET ME IN, YOU THICK-NECKED *LOUT!*
I GO WHERE I *CHOOSE* IN THIS TOWN! *BELIEVE* ME...
...YOU *DON'T* WANT TO BE ON MY *BAD SIDE!*
RELAX, MEN.
REMEMBER YOUR *BRIEFING.*
THIS IS MR. *HARVEY DENT*--
--A FORMER D.A. *SCARRED BY CRIMINALS.* NOW HE DECIDES WHAT SIDE OF THE *LAW* HE'S ON AT THE FLIP OF A *COIN.*
TELL ME, MR. DENT...WHAT DOES THE COIN SAY *TONIGHT?*

THAT WE SHOULD BE IN *BUSINESS* TOGETHER, DR. MALLOY... THE *TWO* OF US.
INTERESTING.
TELL ME WHY.
I KNOW QUITE A BIT ABOUT YOU AS *WELL*, DR. MALLOY.
ABOUT YOUR *PSYCHOLOGY BACKGROUND*.
ABOUT YOUR *TERRIBLE* INCIDENT.
ABOUT YOUR *EMPIRE* IN METROPOLIS.
SO.
I COME WITH AN *OFFER*.

MR. DENT... *DO* ENLIGHTEN ME.
WHAT COULD YOU *POSSIBLY* HAVE TO OFFER THAT WOULD BE OF *VALUE* TO ME?
A CERTAIN *POLICE FILE* IN MY POSSESSION.
ONE WHOSE *CONTENTS* WOULD HELP YOU *IMMENSELY.*
IN RETURN, I'LL SERVE AS YOUR *SECOND-IN-COMMAND.*
...
I'LL CONSIDER IT.
CONSIDER--?
YOU MAY OR MAY NOT BE HEARING FROM ME, MR. DENT.
CALL IT A *FIFTY-FIFTY CHANCE.*

I--
HOW MANY BATCAVES DO YOU *HAVE?*
ONE.
BUT WE JUST *LEFT* THE--
YOU'RE THINKING TOO *SMALL,* ROBIN.

THERE'S A *REASON* BATS ARE SO POPULOUS IN GOTHAM.
FEW PEOPLE REALIZE IT'S BUILT ON A *VAST NETWORK* OF *LARGELY UNEXPLORED CAVERNS.*
IN A SENSE, THE BATCAVE ISN'T SIMPLY UNDER THE *MANOR.*
IT'S UNDERNEATH THE *WHOLE OF THE CITY.*

SKREESKREET
THE CAR HAS ITS *USES,* BUT SO DOES A BUDGET FOR *ABANDONED REAL ESTATE.*
ALL ACROSS GOTHAM, WAYNE *SHELL COMPANIES* OWN CONDEMNED BUILDINGS LIKE *THIS* ONE, ALLOWING ME THE ABILITY TO APPEAR OUT OF THE *SHADOWS.*
HOW RICH *ARE* YOU...?
THE BATMOBILE TENDS TO *ANNOUNCE* ITSELF.
WE'RE WORKING OFF A TIP FROM AN INFORMANT ABOUT THE MARONIS PULLING AN *ARSON JOB.* I'D RATHER MAINTAIN A *LOW PROFILE.*
AND YOU NEED TO *STICK TO MY ORDERS.*
UNDERSTOOD?
COPY.

...SO I *SAYS* TO DINO, I SAYS, "BIG TALK FROM A MOOK WHO *MARRIED* HIS WAY INTO THIS FAMILY!"
BULL.
HAND TO *GOD.* JUST 'CAUSE HE BAGS MARIA *SMOKE SHOW* MARONI, WHO IS WAY OUTTA HIS *LEAGUE...*
...HE THINKS SIX YEARS MANAGIN' A FRIGGIN' *PRO SHOP* QUALIFIES HIM F'R ANYTH--
GUYS? WE'RE ABOUT *THREE MINUTES* OUT. SUIT *UP.*
YOU KNOW THE PLAN.
YEAH, YEAH. BURN FALCONE'S METH LAB TO THE *GROUND.* IN, OUT, *BOOM.*
WHATTA WASTE OF PRODUCT.
YEAH, WELL, HE DOESN'T WANNA BE *SUBTLE* ABOUT IT THIS TIME. YOU GOT ENOUGH *GASOLINE* BACK HERE T' DRIVE TO THE *MOON.*
GUARDS'VE BEEN TAKEN OUT. THIS'LL BE A *CAKEWALK.*

THAT'S *ONE* OPTION.
TOMMY, WHAT THE *HOLY HELL*--?
K-CHAK
CHILL. TOMMY'S BEEN WITH THE MARONIS LONGER 'N *ANY* OF US. HE'S *CLOWNIN'*.
TOMMY, QUIT *FARTIN' AROUND* AND--
HOOSH
%$#@! OH, &$#%!
AAAAAAH!

BSHH
EYAAAAH!
AH HA HA HA HA HA!
TRUCK'S *OUT OF CONTROL* IN A NEIGHBORHOOD BUILT FROM *TINDERBOXES!*
HURRY!
K-CHAM

KOFF
KOFF KOFF
HHHH...
...HELP...
...I'LL DIE...
NOT TONIGHT.
TAKE MY HAND.
THAT EVERYONE?
NOPE!
I SAW BIKES OUTSIDE BUT NO KIDS!
ROBIN, LET ME--
ROBIN!

AH, JEEZ...
MY GIRLS! WHERE ARE MY GIRLS?
HEY! DON'T BE *FRIGHTENED,* ALL RIGHT?
THAT'S MY JOB.
WRAP UP AND ***HANG ON!***
MY BABIEIIEES!
KA-BWAM

NOW PRRRRESENTING--
--THE SENSATIONAL FIND OF THE *CENTURY*--
--THAT *AMAZING* YOUNG DAREDEVIL--
--ROBIN THE MAGNIFICENT!
THANKS AGAIN FOR THE COOL CAPE.
DON'T MENTION IT.
ADMIT IT. I HAD YOU SCARED, DIDN'T I?
I'D HAVE GOTTEN YOU OUT.
LIAR.

OH MY *GOD*...
KAFF
...THAT *SMELL*...
REGRETFUL. AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD.
HOW MANY *BACK* THERE?
STILL *BREATHING?* ONE.
CAN WE GET HIM TO A *HOSPITAL?*
NOT IN TIME, NO.

TELL ME HOW THIS *HAPPENED* SO YOU CAN DIE WITH A *CLEANER CONSCIENCE.*
T-T-TOMMY...
TOMMY *MARETTI?* HE'S A *KEY MAN.* LOYAL TO A *FAULT.* WHAT *ABOUT* HIM?
HE... HE WENT... NUTS...
...STARTED... *TORCHIN'*...
"...BUT HIS... FACE...
"...HIS FACE...
"...WAS *MELTING*...
"...LIKE *WAX*... IT WAS MELTI--✳"
WAIT, *WHAT?*

CHAPTER 3

Friday.
THE GIACOMOS ARE HEISTING METHYLAMINE TONIGHT. OUR MAN'S EMBEDDED.
"HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO."
GO! GO!
BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAK
"LEAVE NO ONE BREATHING...
"...AND MAKE SURE THE CAMERAS GET A DAMN GOOD LOOK AT HIS FACE."

... THAT'S *BENNIE GAZZO.*
CLEAR AS *DAY.*
NO *MAKEUP,* NO *PROSTHETICS.*
WHY?
MASTER BRUCE?
DOWN HERE, ALFRED.
SEVERELY BAFFLED.
SIR, YOU'VE SPENT *NO TIME* WITH MR. GRAYSON *ALL WEEK.* HE--
NONE OF THIS MAKES A BIT OF *SENSE,* ALFRED.
OVER THE YEARS, GOTHAM'S FAMILIES HAVE STAKED OUT *VERY FIRM BOUNDARIES AND TERRITORIES.*
THE WHOLE *SYSTEM* OF ORGANIZED CRIME HERE IS AS TAUT AS *PIANO WIRE--*
--AND NO ONE'S *EVER* BEEN STUPID ENOUGH TO RATCHET UP THE *TENSION* NOW THAT IT'S FOUND ITS *LEVEL.*

BE THAT AS IT MAY, SIR, WE MUST--
DENT'S COIN WAS CLEAN-SIDE UP. HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.
THERE'S A NEW GANG BOSS IN THE CITY. HE HAS TO BE THE ONE THROWING SPANNERS INTO THE WORKS.
THAT SOUNDS REASONABLE, SIR. NOW, AS REGARDS TO YOUNG MR. GRAYSON--
IF ALL FIVE FAMILIES TAKE EACH OTHER OUT, GOTHAM IS WIDE OPEN FOR HIM--
--A MATTER OF SOME URGENCY--
--BUT WHO IS HE?
--SIR--
HOW'D I GET SO BLINDSIDED?
THE BOY, MASTER BRUCE!
WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THE BOY!
...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER RAISED YOUR VOICE AT ME, ALFRED.
I DON'T LIKE IT...
...BUT YOU WOULDN'T HAVE WITHOUT GOOD REASON.
I'M SORRY. WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?
THE CIRCUS BOY.
GOOD LORD, WHAT'S WRONG? DID HE HURT HIMSELF? IS HE OKAY?
THIS WAY.

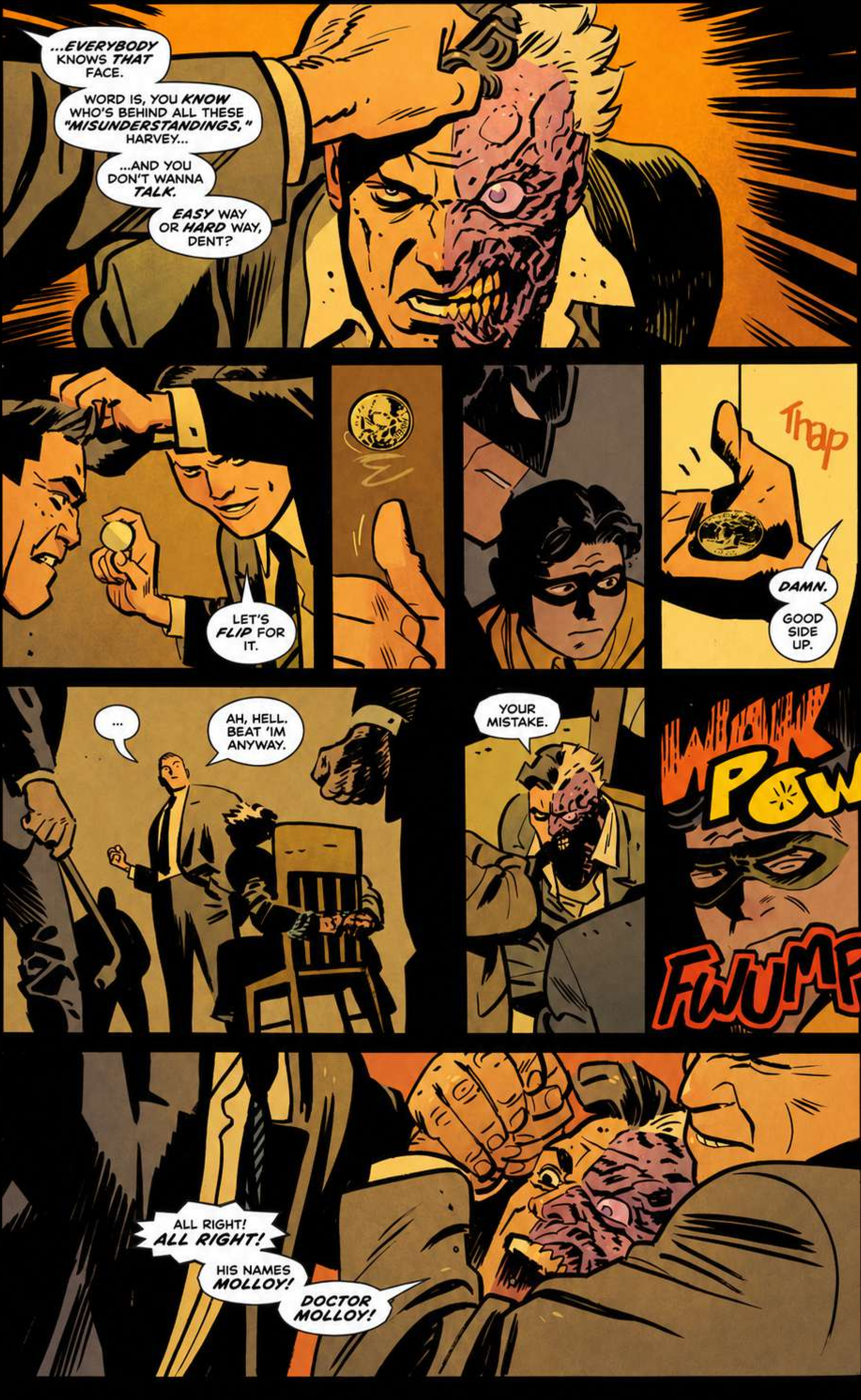
I ADMIT TO HAVING BEEN *PREOCCUPIED* THESE LAST FEW DAYS--
INDEED.
WHERE *IS* HE? IN HIS *ROOM?*
YOU ARE THE *DETECTIVE.* FOLLOW THE *CLUES.*
SIGH
HAVE YOU *SPOKEN* TO HIM ABOUT LEAVING A MESS LIKE THIS?
CONSTANTLY.
AND?

IF I MAY:
"MR. PENNYWORTH LODGES A COMPLAINT," A PLAY IN ONE ACT.
SCENE ONE:
THE FAITHFUL BUTLER MAKES A VALIANT ATTEMPT TO GAIN ENTRY TO YOUNG MR. GRAYSON'S QUARTERS.
TUMP
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
BWAH HA HA HA!
SCENE TWO:
THE CHILD RESPONDS IN TYPICAL FASHION.
KLK CHAK
ANNNND CURTAIN.
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RICHARD, NOT I.
PLEASE.
FIX.
THIS.

YOU MISSED A SWEATER.
MY HANDS ARE *QUITE* FULL.
I JUST...
...I DON'T *UNDERSTAND.* ARE *ALL* BOYS HIS AGE LIKE THIS?
I WOULDN'T KNOW.
YOU WERE *BORN* 25 YEARS OLD.
HE MAY BE A CAPABLE *ROBIN,* SIR--
--BUT *DICK GRAYSON* IS *UTTERLY UNPREDICTABLE.*
THE BOY NEEDS *STRUCTURE.*
THAT'S WHAT I DON'T *GET.* WE'RE SO MUCH *ALIKE*--
--THAT I THOUGHT IF I GAVE HIM THE *FREEDOM* I HAD AT HIS AGE, HE'D USE IT *RESPONSIBLY.*
ARE YOU?
I GREW UP JUST *FINE* WITHOUT OVERSIGHT.
I SUPPOSE I ASSUMED BECAUSE DICK AND I ENDURED A *PARALLEL TRAUMA*...
...WELL, IT WOULD AFFECT DICK *IDENTICALLY.*
BUT THAT IGNORES OUR *CONTRASTING BACKGROUNDS.*
INDEED. HE IS *NOT* YOU.
HE IS A *TORNADO IN SWEATPANTS.*
FORTUNATELY, HE HAS AN *OUTLET* FOR THAT ENERGY.

One hour later.
I FORGOT MY *BAT-UMBRELLA.*
HH.
ACCORDING TO *GORDON,* THIS SHIP IS *OUTSIDE* THE COASTAL LIMIT OF HIS JURISDICTION.
THAT'LL DRAW OUT THE FALCONES, WHO NEED TO KEEP A *LOW PROFILE* IN THE CITY.
APPARENTLY, THEY THINK THEY'VE *FOUND* SOMEONE WHO CAN SHED SOME LIGHT ON ALL THE *CHAOS.*
STAY QUIET.

...SO HERE'S THE THING.
MY BOY *CARLO* SWEARS ON OUR *GRAMMA'S GRAVE* THAT HE WAS IN *METROPOLIS* THE NIGHT MARONI'S DRIVER GOT SHOT.
HOW COME I *BELIEVE* HIM, EVEN THOUGH WE ALL KNOW CARLO'S GENERALLY SO FULLA CRAP THAT HIS *EYES* ARE BROWN?
'CAUSE I WAS THERE *WITH* CARLO.
OOPSIE.
WHOEVER THAT WAS AT THE *WEIGH STATION* WAS AN *IMPOSTER.*
NOW, DO WE THINK THE RINGER WAS *YOU?*
'CAUSE I'LL RING YOU *OUT.*
LET'S ASK *UNCLE DARIO.* WHADDA *YOU* THINK, UNC?
NAH. I DON'T FIGGER IT WAS HIM.
ME, NEITHER.
WHY *IZZAT,* UNC?
BECAUSE, ALFONSO...


...EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT FACE.
WORD IS, YOU KNOW WHO'S BEHIND ALL THESE "MISUNDERSTANDINGS," HARVEY...
...AND YOU DON'T WANNA TALK.
EASY WAY OR HARD WAY, DENT?
LET'S FLIP FOR IT.
Thap
DAMN.
GOOD SIDE UP.
...
AH, HELL. BEAT 'IM ANYWAY.
YOUR MISTAKE.
POW
FWUMP
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!
HIS NAMES MOLLOY!
DOCTOR MOLLOY!

PFFT.
--AND THAT'S ALL YOU GET FOR ***FREE.***
YOU THINK A ***TIRE IRON*** BUYS YOU POWER, PUNK? BACK ***OFF.***
YOUR DADDY KNOWS NO ONE OPERATES IN GOTHAM WITHOUT PAYING THE ***DENT TAX.***
WHO DO YOU THINK LET THE ***ZUCCOS*** ROLL THROUGH LAST MONTH...
...SO THEY COULD KILL THAT ***CIRCUS COUPLE?***
ROBIN!
YOU DID ***WHAT?***

OUT OF MY *WAY!*
HE'S *MINE!*
YOU'RE A *MONSTER!*
HALF THE TIME.
THIS ISN'T A *JOKE!*
YOU'RE THE *GATEKEEPER?* YOU *LET* MURDERERS MOVE THROUGH THIS AWFUL TOWN?
Paf
Paf
KRAK
WOW, KID...
...YOU'LL BELIEVE *ANYTHING.*
WHAT?
ROBIN, HE WAS *BLUFFING!* TAKE *COVER!*
YOU GET THE OTHERS! *I'VE* GOT DENT!
DO YOU?

STOMP
THE FALCONES WEREN'T READY FOR A FIGHT! THEY'RE ALREADY *GONE*--
--BUT HARVEY'S NOT! HE'S THE REAL DANGER! *FIND HIM!*
BALLAST RELEASE
K-CHRRGHNNG

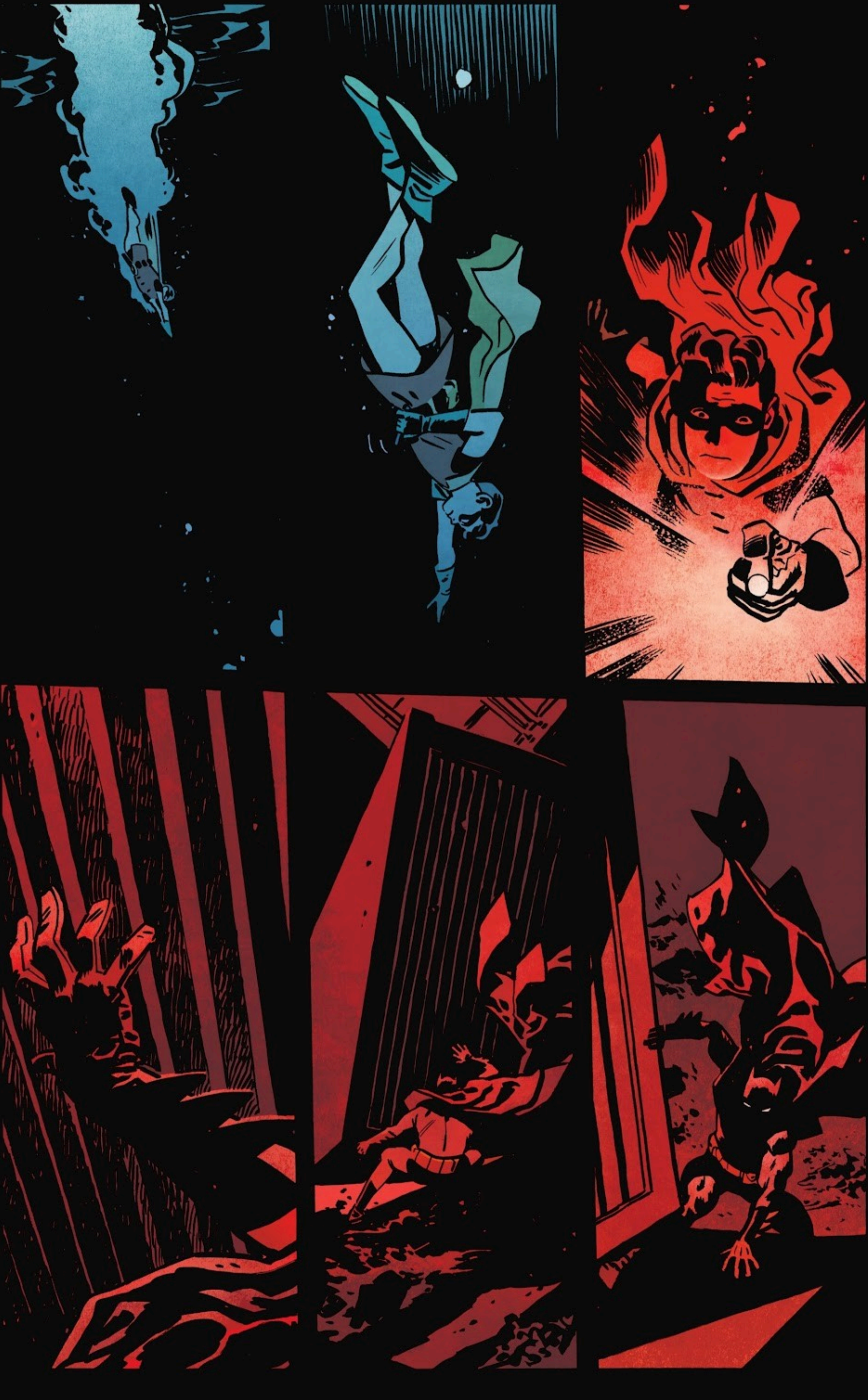
SPLSSHH
ABOVE DECK! HURRY!
HARVEY'S OPENED THE BALLAST TANKS!
GET TO THE SUBMERSIBLE!
NO! UP AHEAD! I SEE HIM!

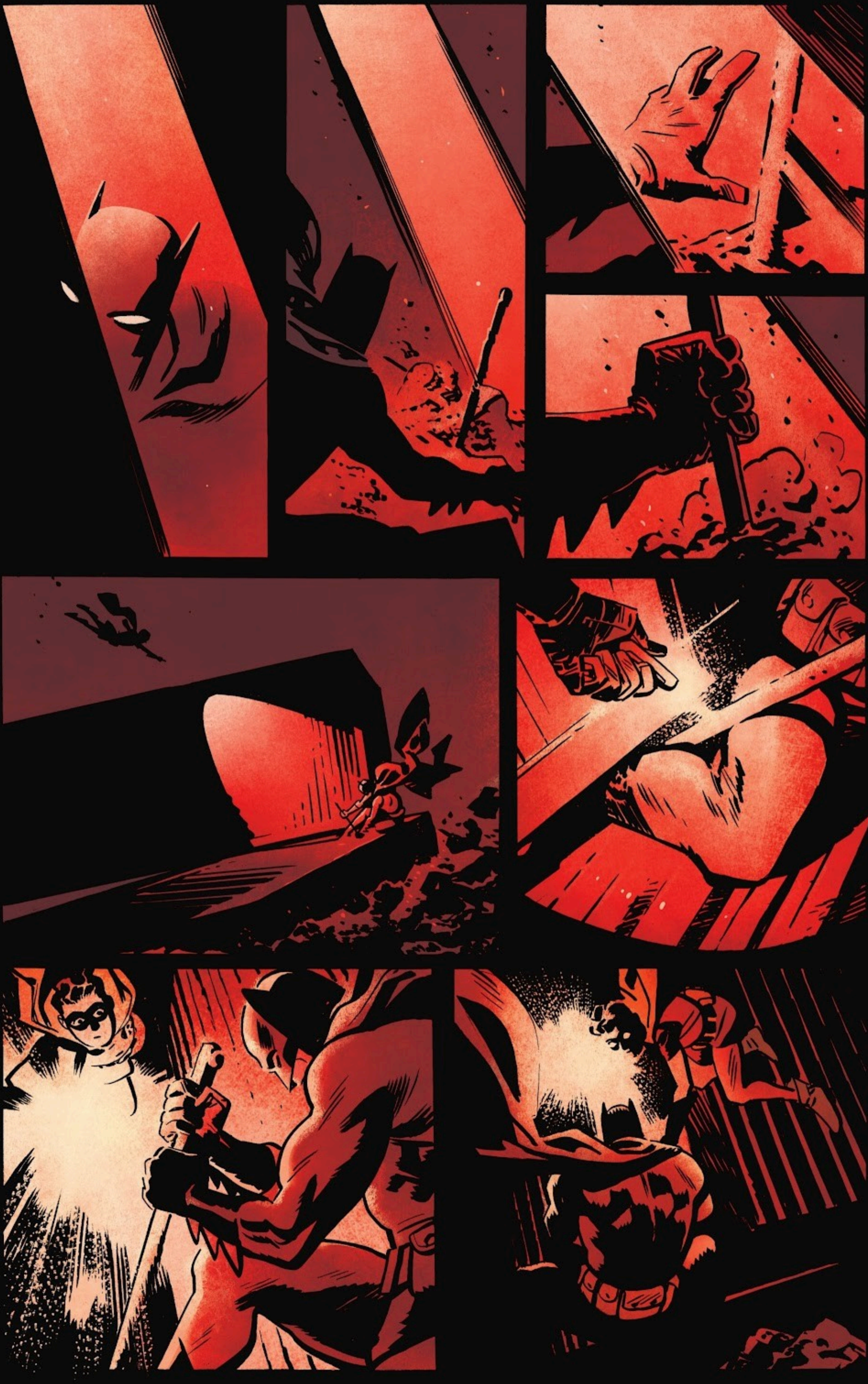
I...
...I MISSED...!
WE HAVE TO MOVE!
WHICH WAY'S OUR SHIP? I'M ALL TURNED--
--AROUND--!
ROBIN!

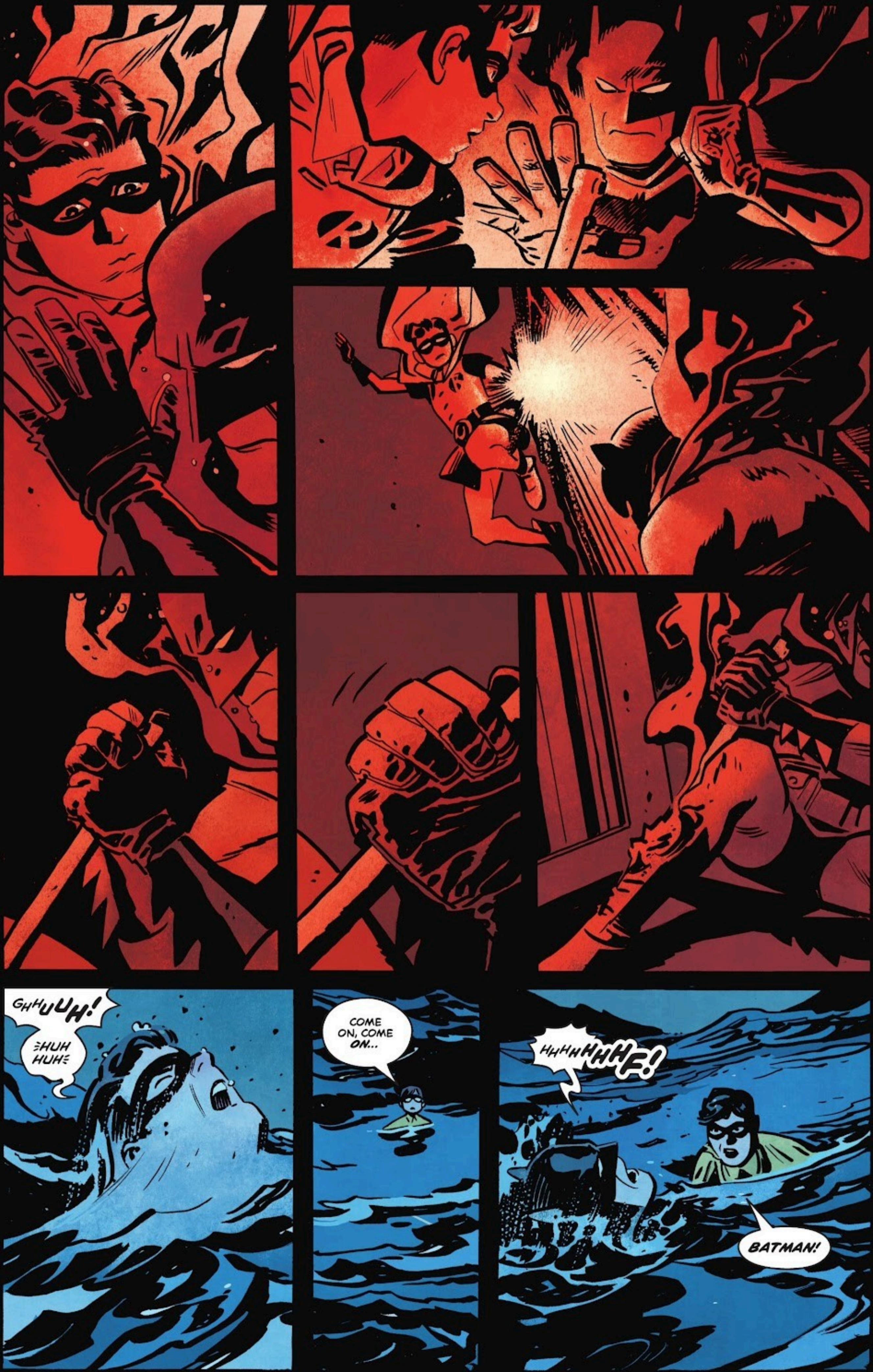
WATCH OUT FOR THE *LOOSE CORDS!*
GOT YOU!
TOOOO CLOSE.
SORRY, BATMAN, I--
BATMAN, LOOK OUT!
SN KT
CHAM
BATMANNN!

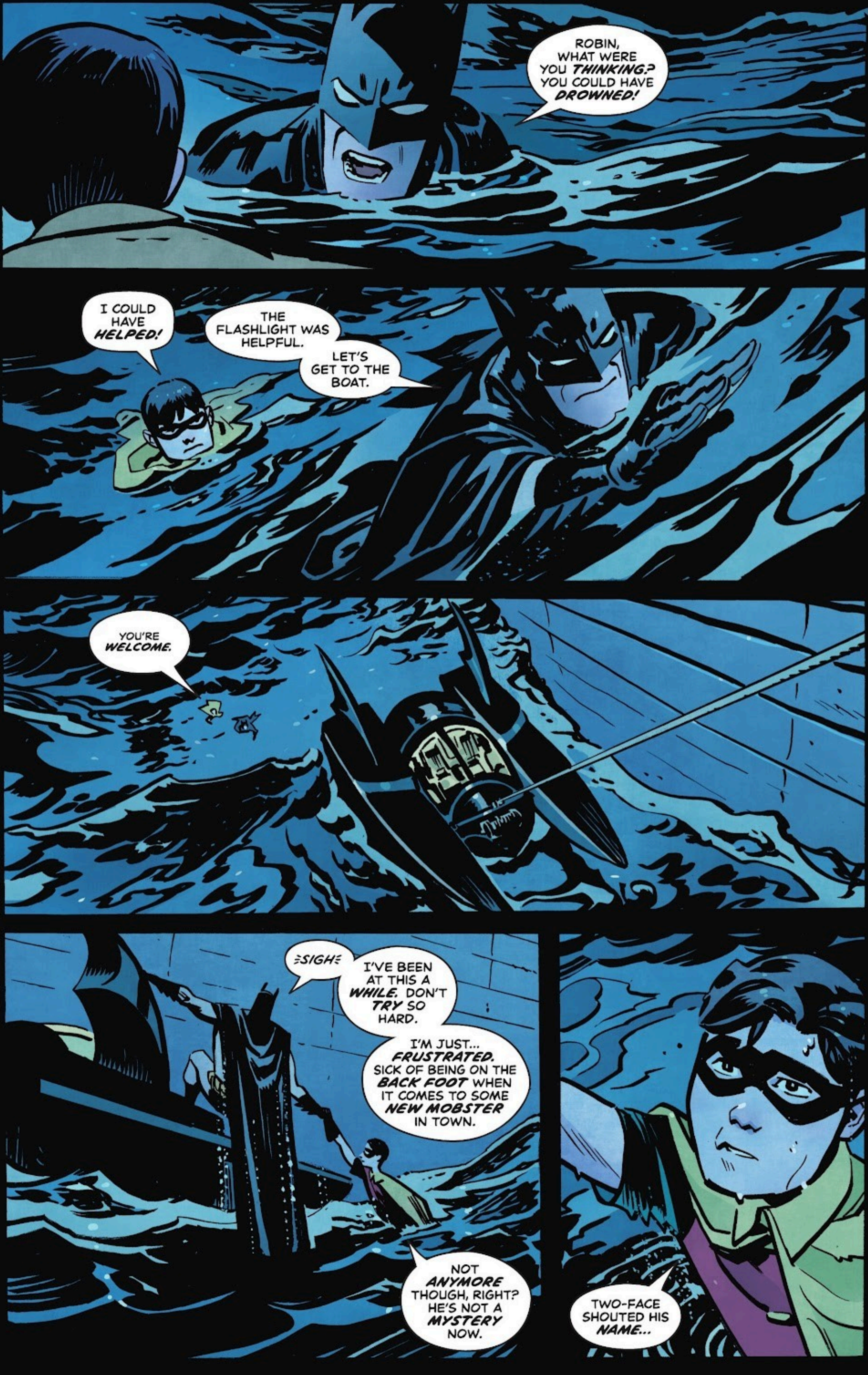
To be continued!

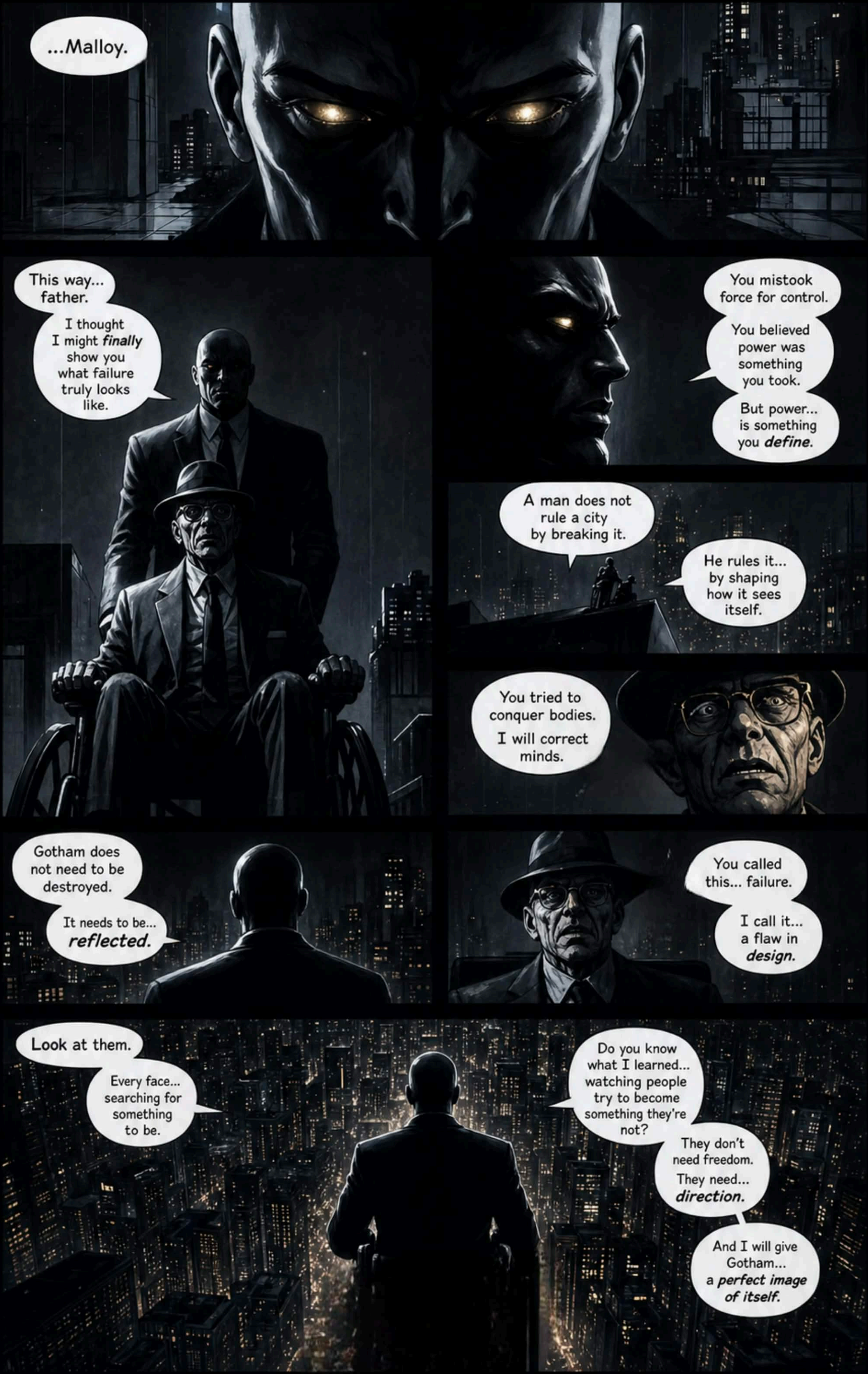
CHAPTER 4

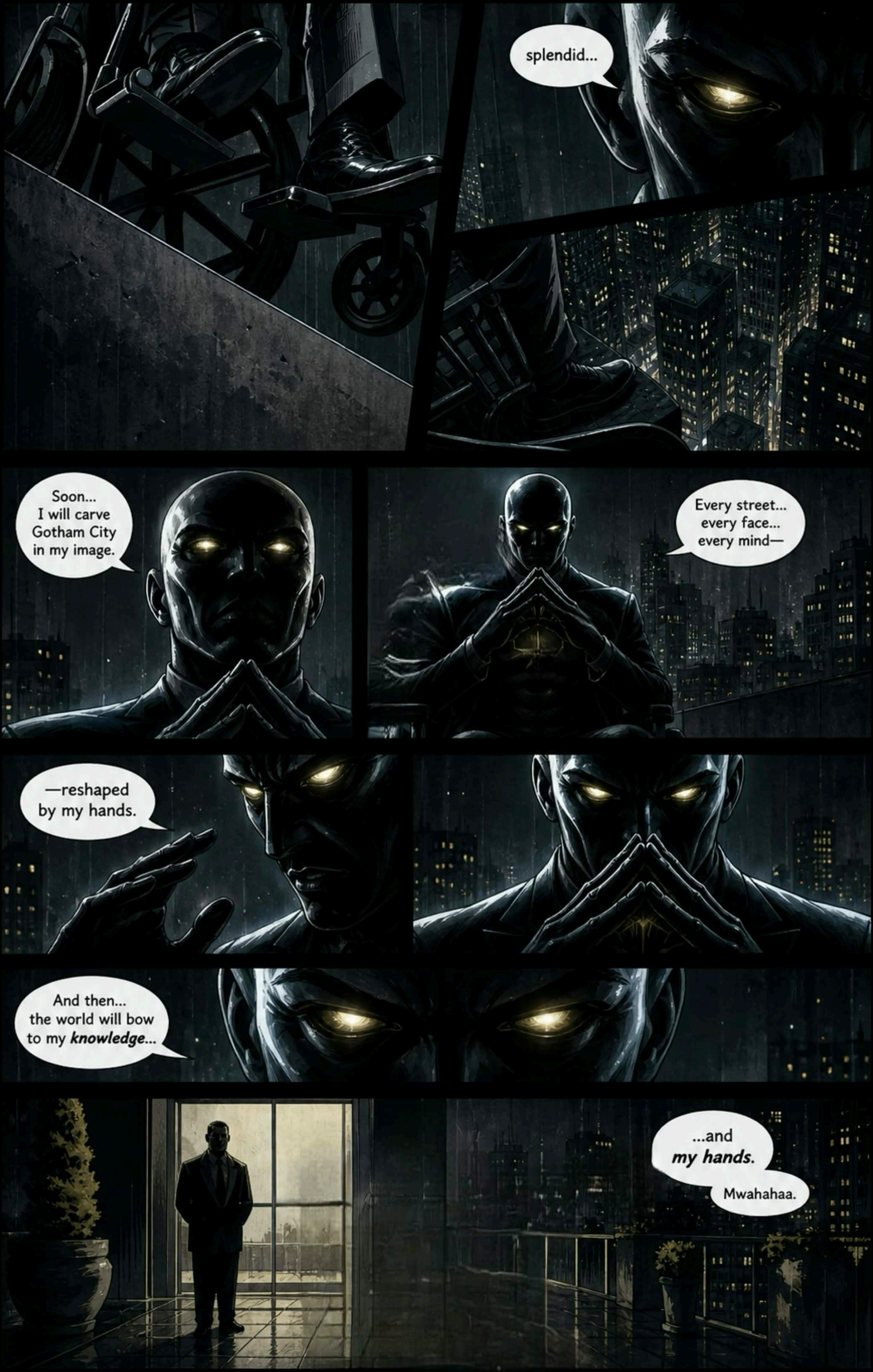


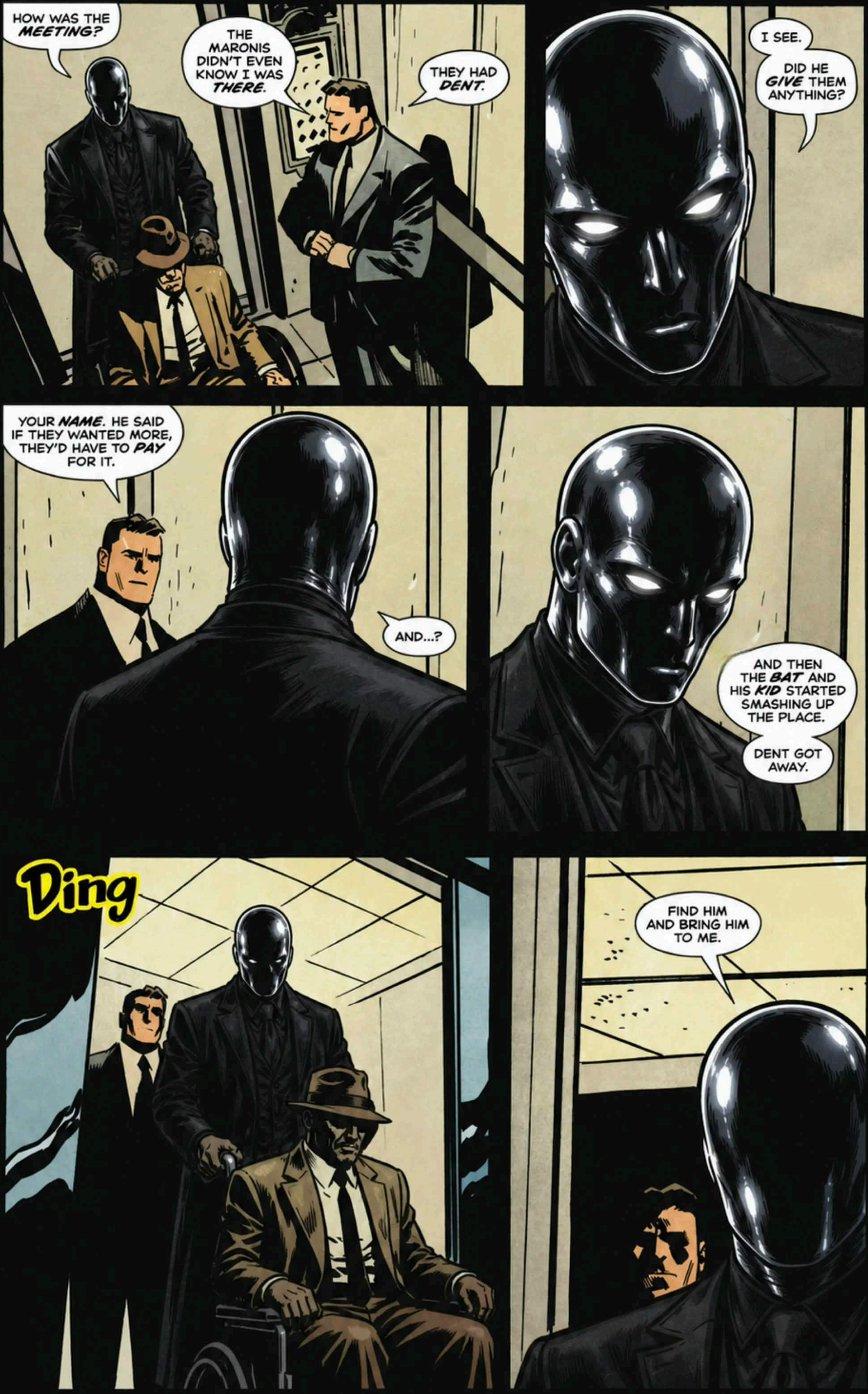


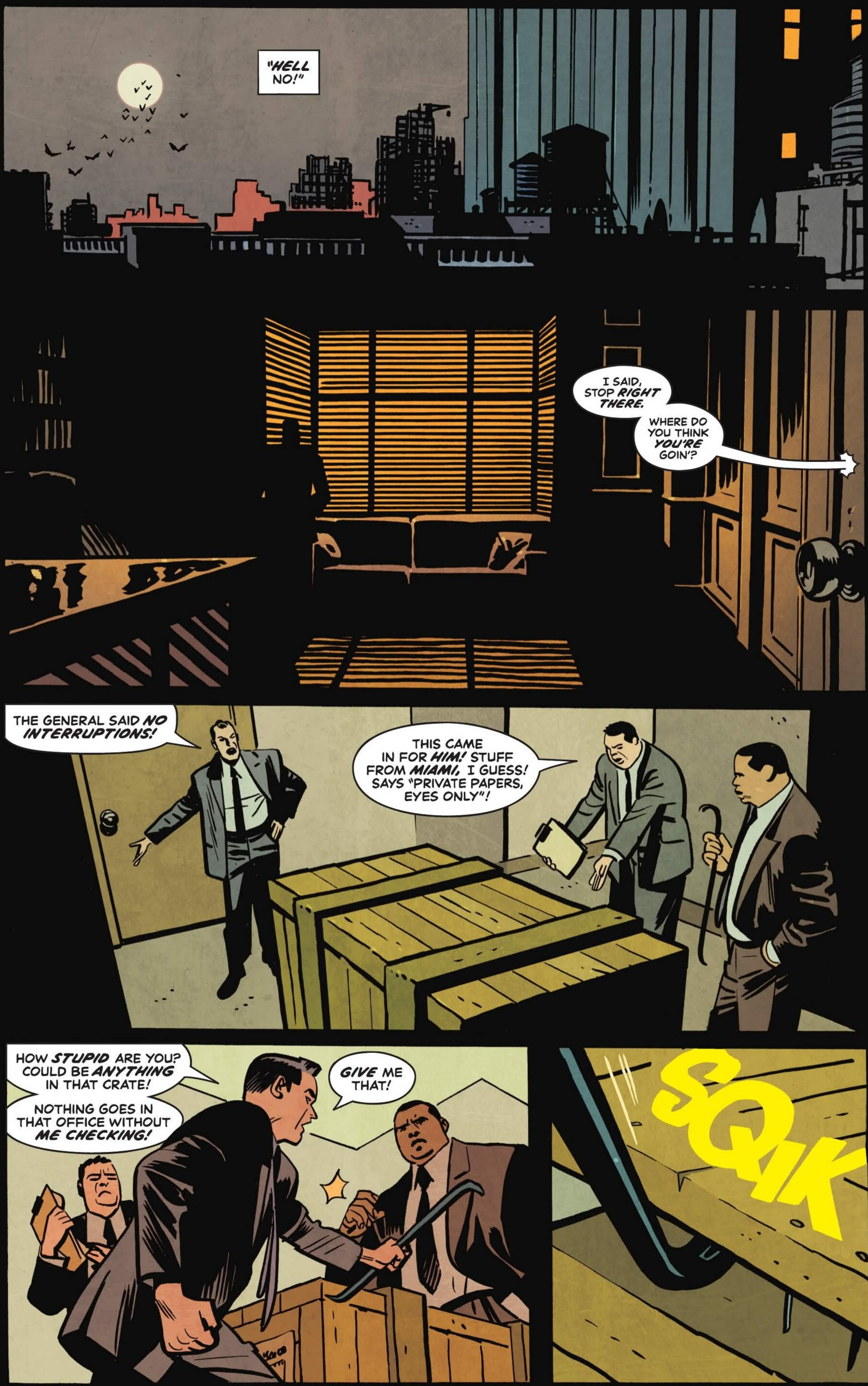

GHHUUH!
HUH HUH
COME ON, COME ON...
HHHHHHHF!
BATMAN!

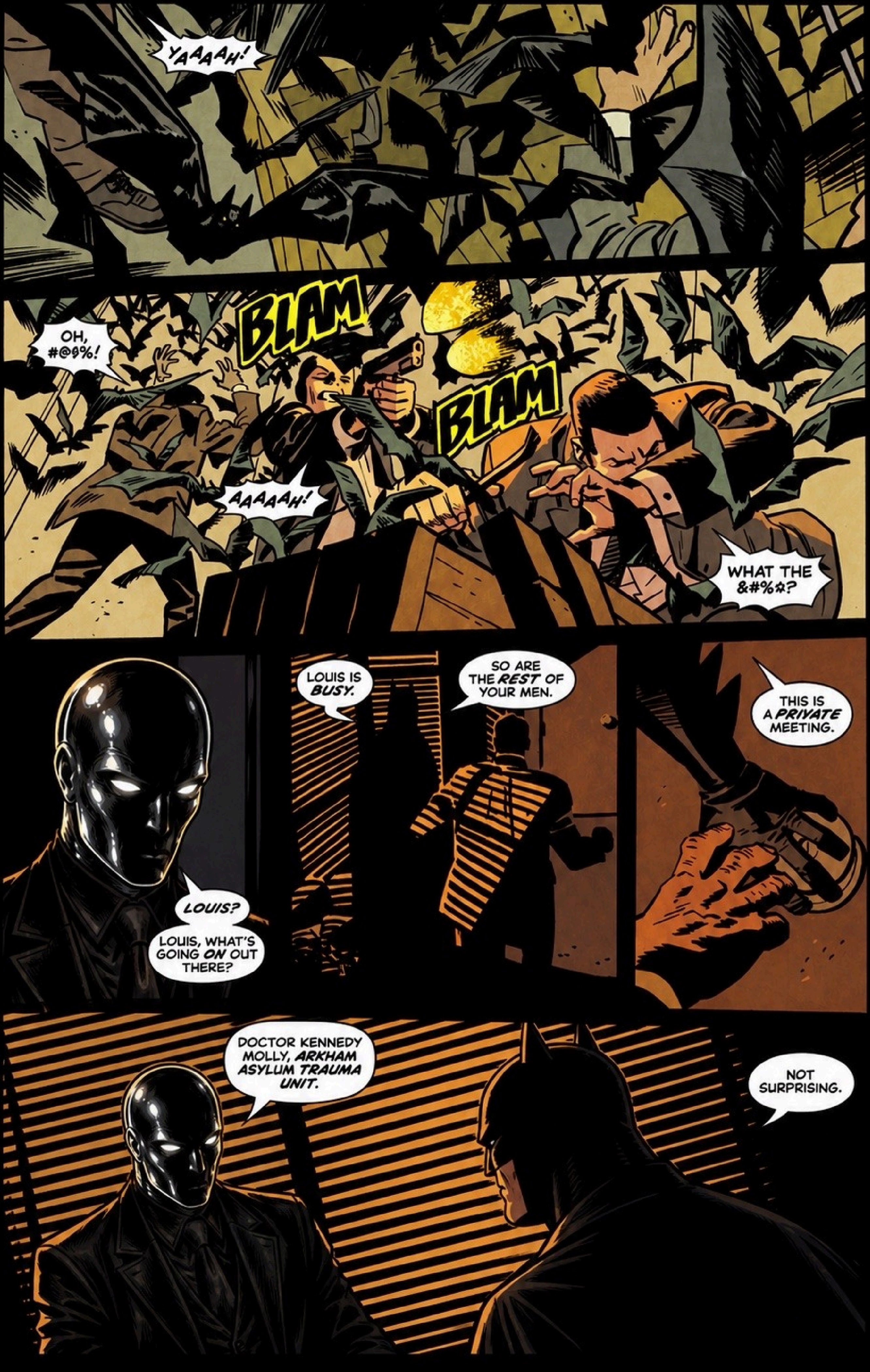

ROBIN, WHAT WERE YOU *THINKING?* YOU COULD HAVE *DROWNED!*
I COULD HAVE *HELPED!*
THE FLASHLIGHT WAS HELPFUL.
LET'S GET TO THE BOAT.
YOU'RE *WELCOME.*
SIGH
I'VE BEEN AT THIS A *WHILE.* DON'T *TRY* SO HARD.
I'M JUST... *FRUSTRATED.* SICK OF BEING ON THE *BACK FOOT* WHEN IT COMES TO SOME *NEW MOBSTER* IN TOWN.
NOT *ANYMORE* THOUGH, RIGHT? HE'S NOT A *MYSTERY* NOW.
TWO-FACE SHOUTED HIS *NAME...*

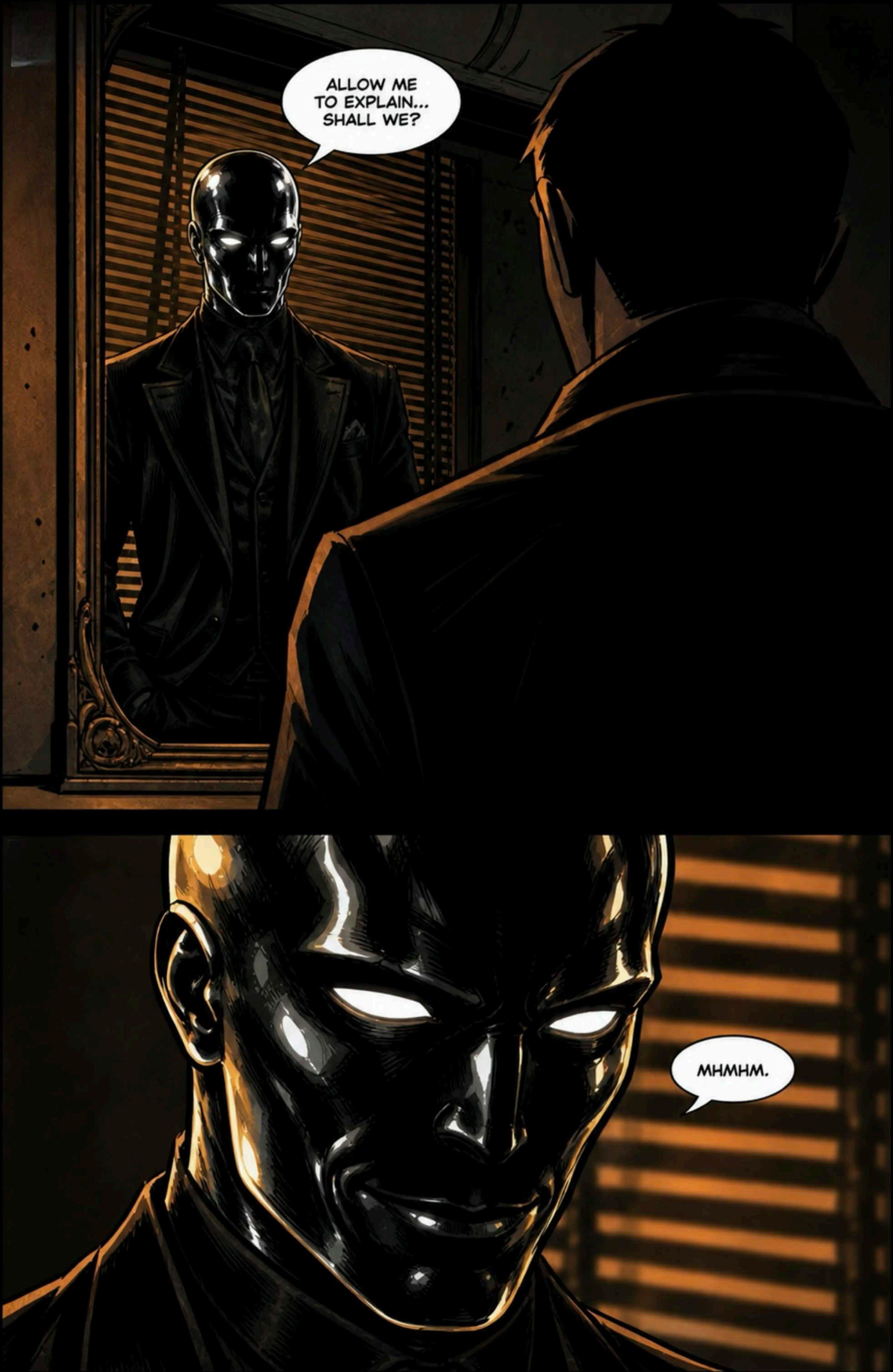

...Malloy.
This way... father.
I thought I might *finally* show you what failure truly looks like.
You mistook force for control.
You believed power was something you took.
But power... is something you ***define.***
A man does not rule a city by breaking it.
He rules it... by shaping how it sees itself.
You tried to conquer bodies.
I will correct minds.
Gotham does not need to be destroyed.
It needs to be... ***reflected.***
You called this... failure.
I call it... a flaw in ***design.***
Look at them.
Every face... searching for something to be.
Do you know what I learned... watching people try to become something they're not?
They don't need freedom.
They need... ***direction.***
And I will give Gotham... a ***perfect image of itself.***

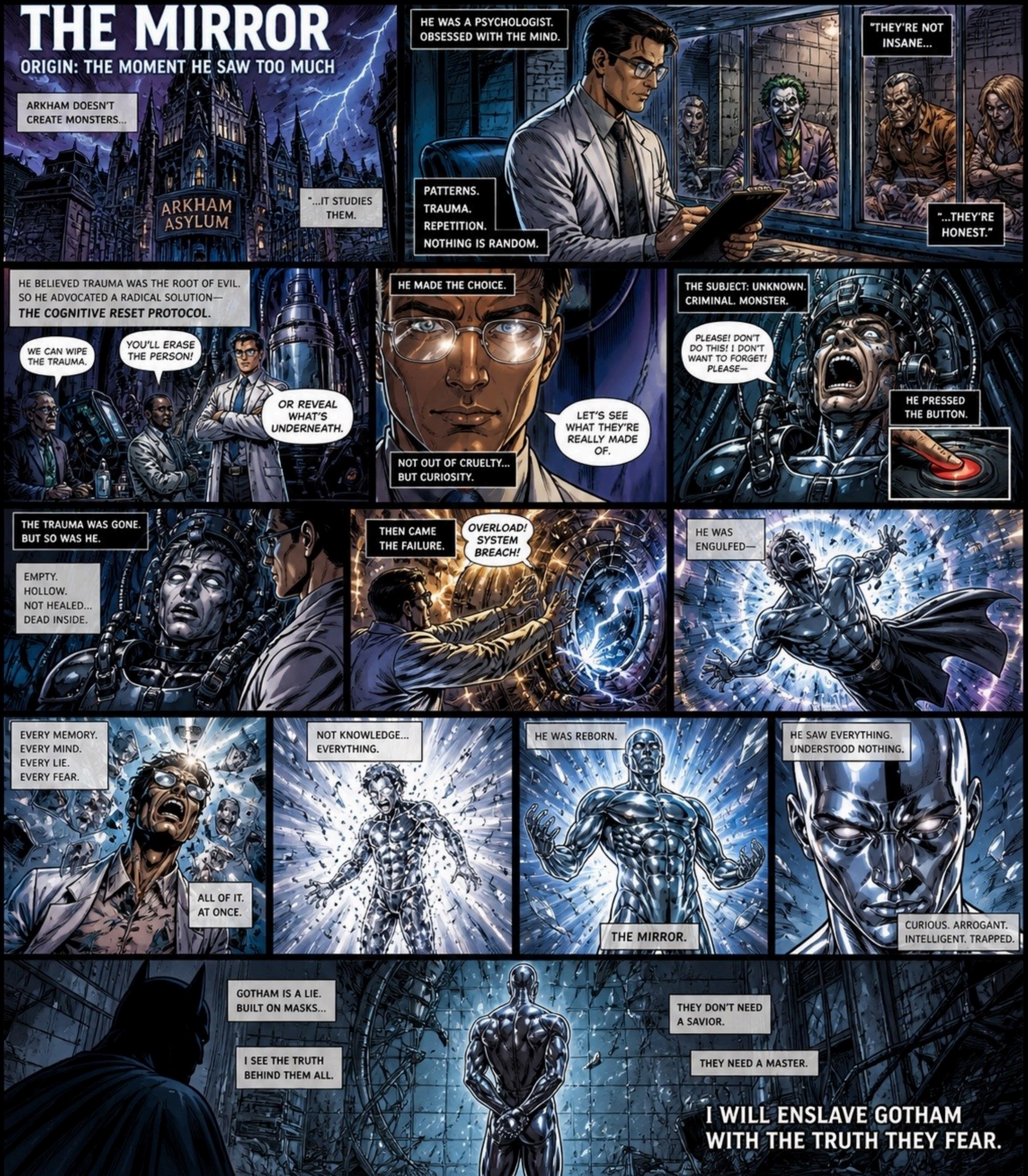

splendid...
Soon... I will carve Gotham City in my image.
Every street... every face... every mind—
—reshaped by my hands.
And then... the world will bow to my *knowledge*...
...and ***my hands.***
Mwahahaa.

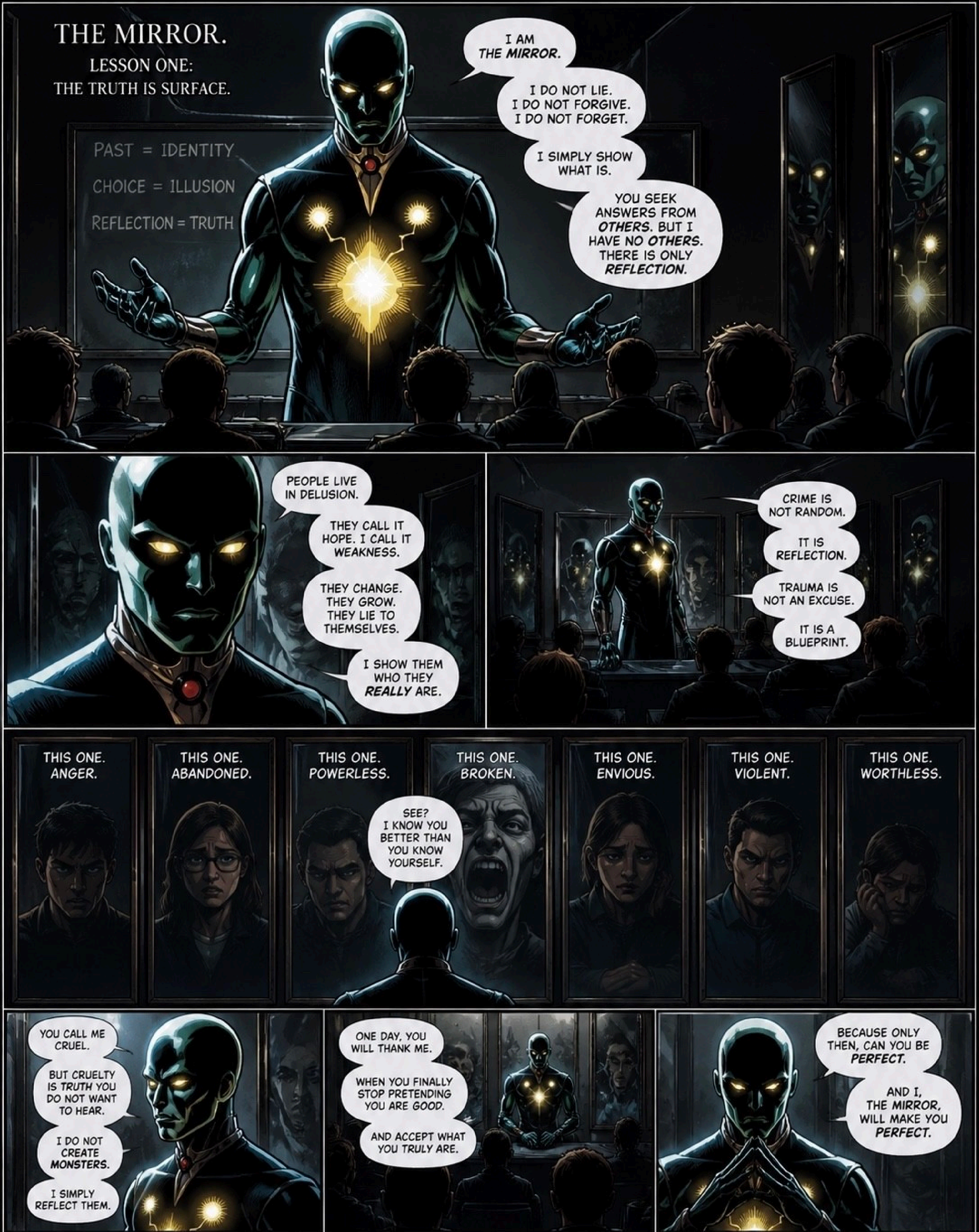

HOW WAS THE *MEETING?*
THE MARONIS DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I WAS *THERE*.
THEY HAD *DENT*.
I SEE.
DID HE *GIVE* THEM ANYTHING?
YOUR *NAME*. HE SAID IF THEY WANTED MORE, THEY'D HAVE TO *PAY* FOR IT.
AND...?
AND THEN THE *BAT* AND HIS *KID* STARTED SMASHING UP THE PLACE.
DENT GOT AWAY.
Ding
FIND HIM AND BRING HIM TO ME.

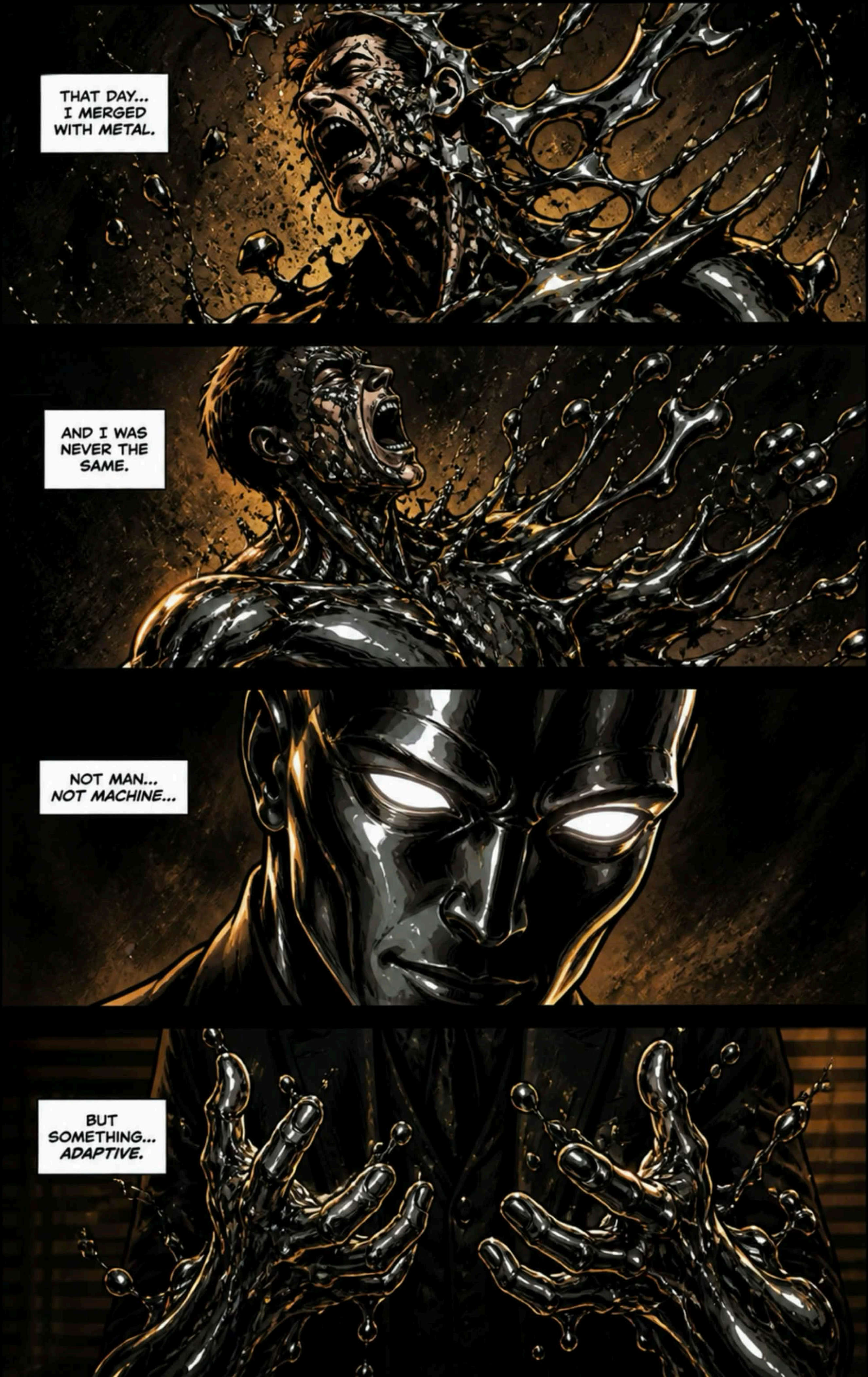

"HELL NO!"
I SAID, STOP RIGHT THERE.
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOIN'?
THE GENERAL SAID NO INTERRUPTIONS!
THIS CAME IN FOR HIM! STUFF FROM MIAMI, I GUESS! SAYS "PRIVATE PAPERS, EYES ONLY"!
HOW STUPID ARE YOU? COULD BE ANYTHING IN THAT CRATE!
NOTHING GOES IN THAT OFFICE WITHOUT ME CHECKING!
GIVE ME THAT!
SQIK

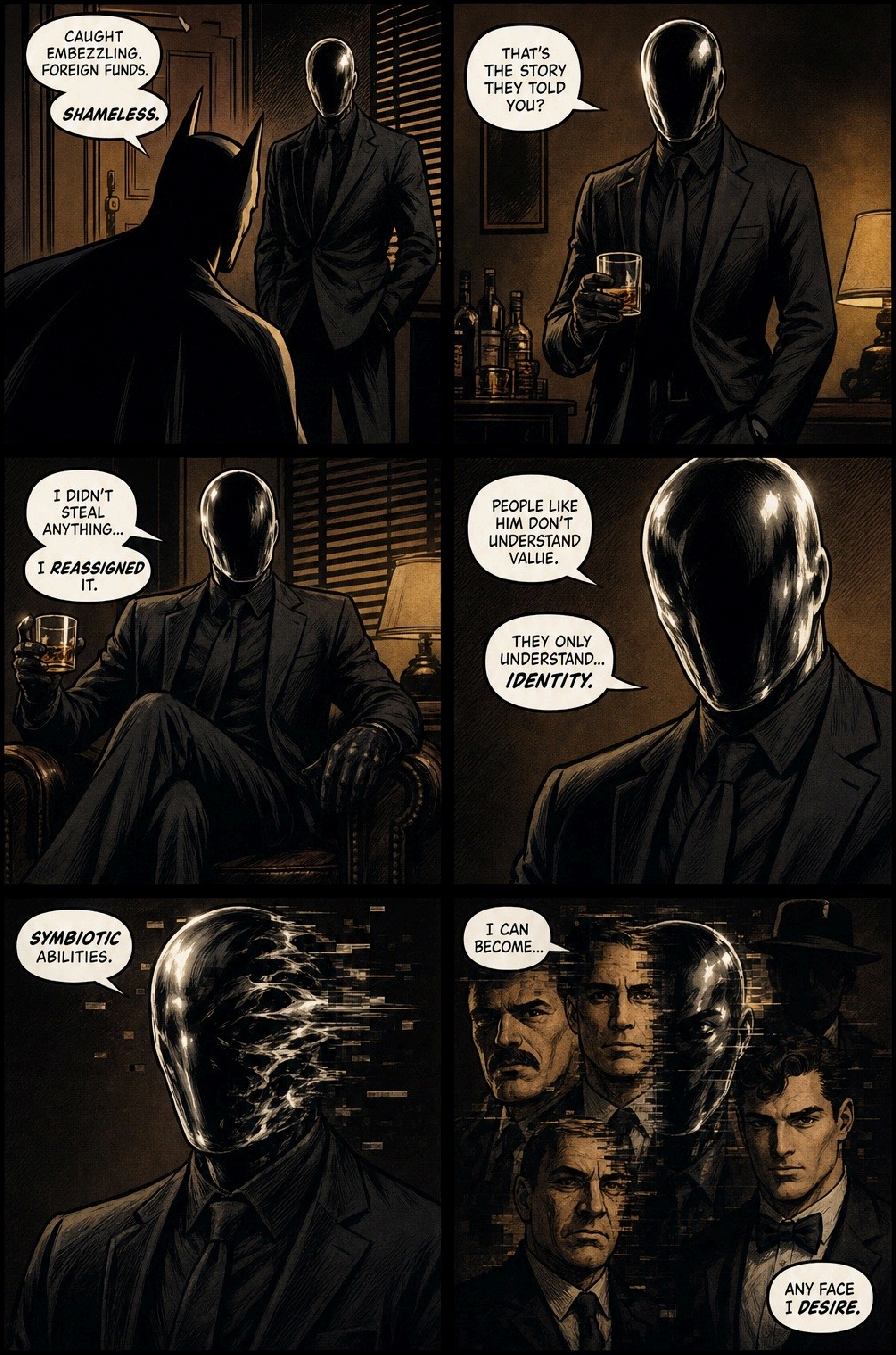

YAAAAH!
OH, #@$%!
BLAM
BLAM
AAAAAH!
WHAT THE &#%☆?
LOUIS?
LOUIS, WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?
LOUIS IS BUSY.
SO ARE THE REST OF YOUR MEN.
THIS IS A PRIVATE MEETING.
DOCTOR KENNEDY MOLLY, ARKHAM ASYLUM TRAUMA UNIT.
NOT SURPRISING.

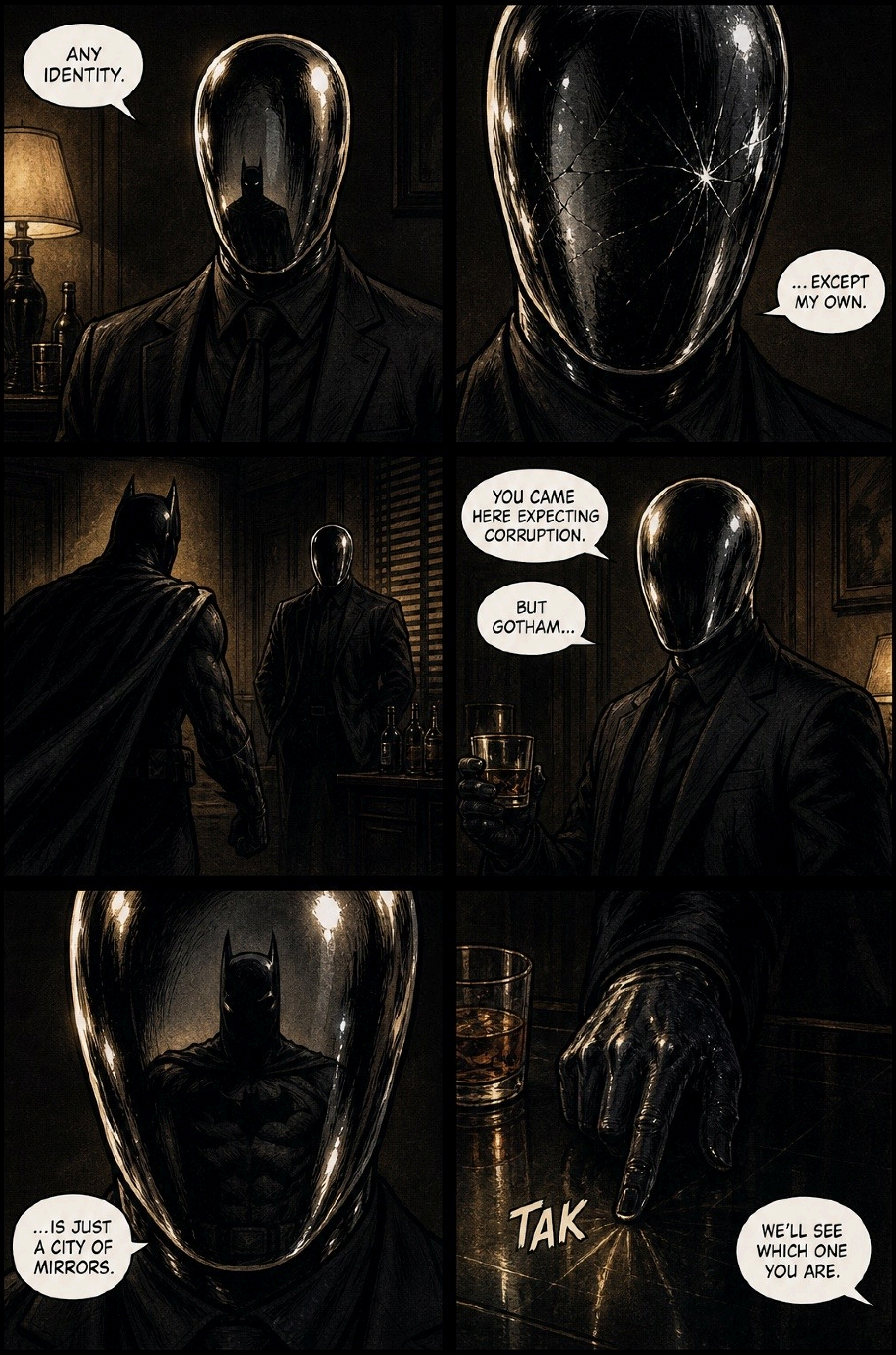

ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN... SHALL WE?
MHMHM.

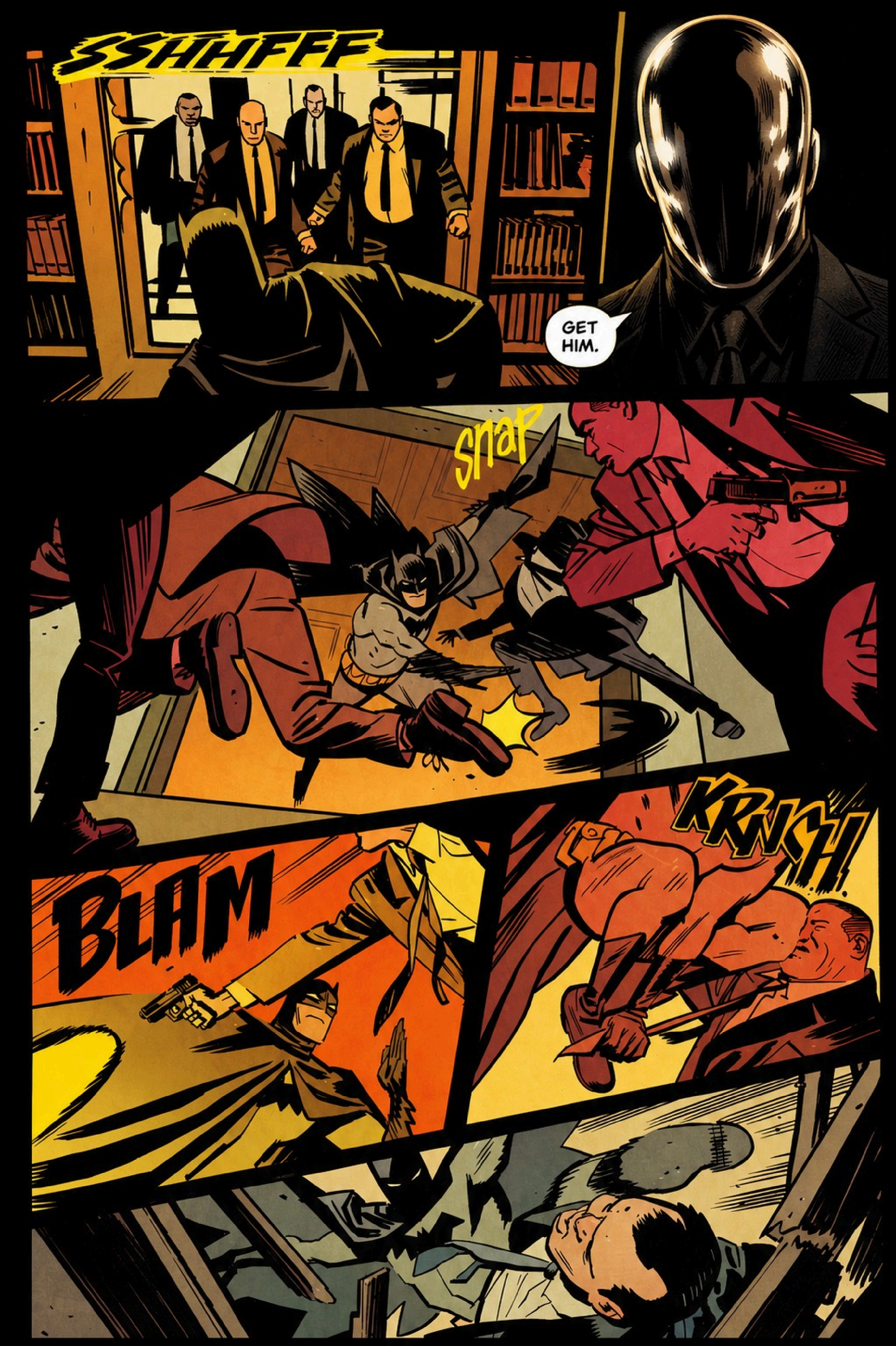

THE MIRROR
ORIGIN: THE MOMENT HE SAW TOO MUCH
ARKHAM DOESN'T CREATE MONSTERS...
ARKHAM ASYLUM
"...IT STUDIES THEM.
HE WAS A PSYCHOLOGIST. OBSESSED WITH THE MIND.
PATTERNS. TRAUMA. REPETITION. NOTHING IS RANDOM.
"THEY'RE NOT INSANE...
"...THEY'RE HONEST."
HE BELIEVED TRAUMA WAS THE ROOT OF EVIL. SO HE ADVOCATED A RADICAL SOLUTION— THE COGNITIVE RESET PROTOCOL.
WE CAN WIPE THE TRAUMA.
YOU'LL ERASE THE PERSON!
OR REVEAL WHAT'S UNDERNEATH.
HE MADE THE CHOICE.
LET'S SEE WHAT THEY'RE REALLY MADE OF.
NOT OUT OF CRUELTY... BUT CURIOSITY.
THE SUBJECT: UNKNOWN. CRIMINAL. MONSTER.
PLEASE! DON'T DO THIS! I DON'T WANT TO FORGET! PLEASE—
HE PRESSED THE BUTTON.
THE TRAUMA WAS GONE. BUT SO WAS HE.
EMPTY. HOLLOW. NOT HEALED... DEAD INSIDE.
THEN CAME THE FAILURE.
OVERLOAD! SYSTEM BREACH!
HE WAS ENGULFED—
EVERY MEMORY. EVERY MIND. EVERY LIE. EVERY FEAR.
ALL OF IT. AT ONCE.
NOT KNOWLEDGE... EVERYTHING.
HE WAS REBORN.
THE MIRROR.
HE SAW EVERYTHING. UNDERSTOOD NOTHING.
CURIOUS. ARROGANT. INTELLIGENT. TRAPPED.
GOTHAM IS A LIE. BUILT ON MASKS...
I SEE THE TRUTH BEHIND THEM ALL.
THEY DON'T NEED A SAVIOR.
THEY NEED A MASTER.
I WILL ENSLAVE GOTHAM WITH THE TRUTH THEY FEAR.

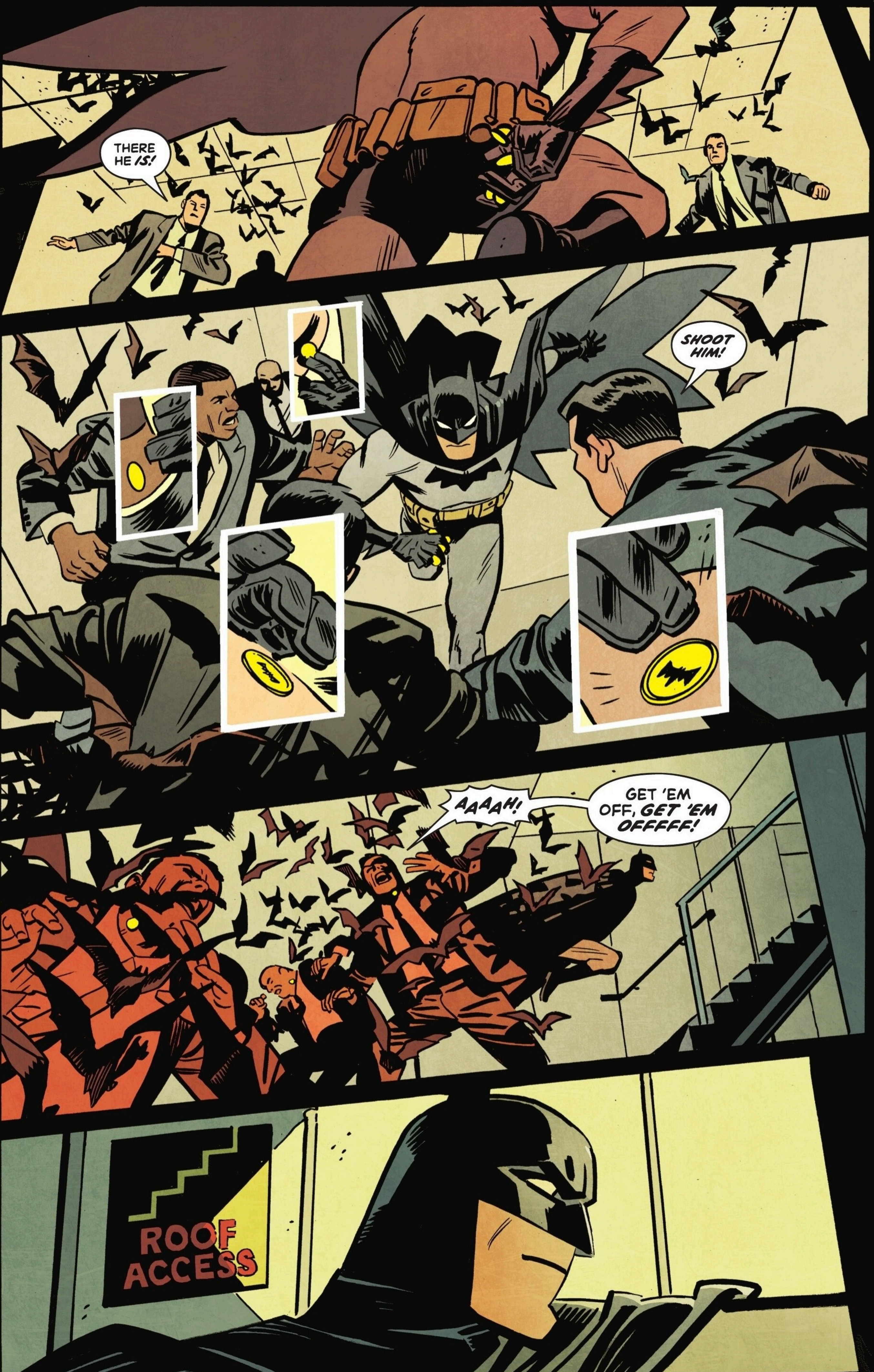

THE MIRROR.
LESSON ONE:
THE TRUTH IS SURFACE.
PAST = IDENTITY
CHOICE = ILLUSION
REFLECTION = TRUTH
I AM THE *MIRROR*.
I DO NOT LIE. I DO NOT FORGIVE. I DO NOT FORGET.
I SIMPLY SHOW WHAT IS.
YOU SEEK ANSWERS FROM *OTHERS*. BUT I HAVE NO *OTHERS*. THERE IS ONLY *REFLECTION*.
PEOPLE LIVE IN DELUSION.
THEY CALL IT HOPE. I CALL IT *WEAKNESS*.
THEY CHANGE. THEY GROW. THEY LIE TO THEMSELVES.
I SHOW THEM WHO THEY *REALLY* ARE.
CRIME IS NOT RANDOM.
IT IS REFLECTION.
TRAUMA IS NOT AN EXCUSE.
IT IS A BLUEPRINT.
THIS ONE. ANGER.
THIS ONE. ABANDONED.
THIS ONE. POWERLESS.
SEE? I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF.
THIS ONE. BROKEN.
THIS ONE. ENVIOUS.
THIS ONE. VIOLENT.
THIS ONE. WORTHLESS.
YOU CALL ME CRUEL.
BUT CRUELTY IS *TRUTH* YOU DO NOT WANT TO HEAR.
I DO NOT CREATE *MONSTERS*.
I SIMPLY REFLECT THEM.
ONE DAY, YOU WILL THANK ME.
WHEN YOU FINALLY STOP PRETENDING YOU ARE GOOD.
AND ACCEPT WHAT YOU TRULY ARE.
BECAUSE ONLY THEN, CAN YOU BE *PERFECT*.
AND I, THE *MIRROR*, WILL MAKE YOU *PERFECT*.

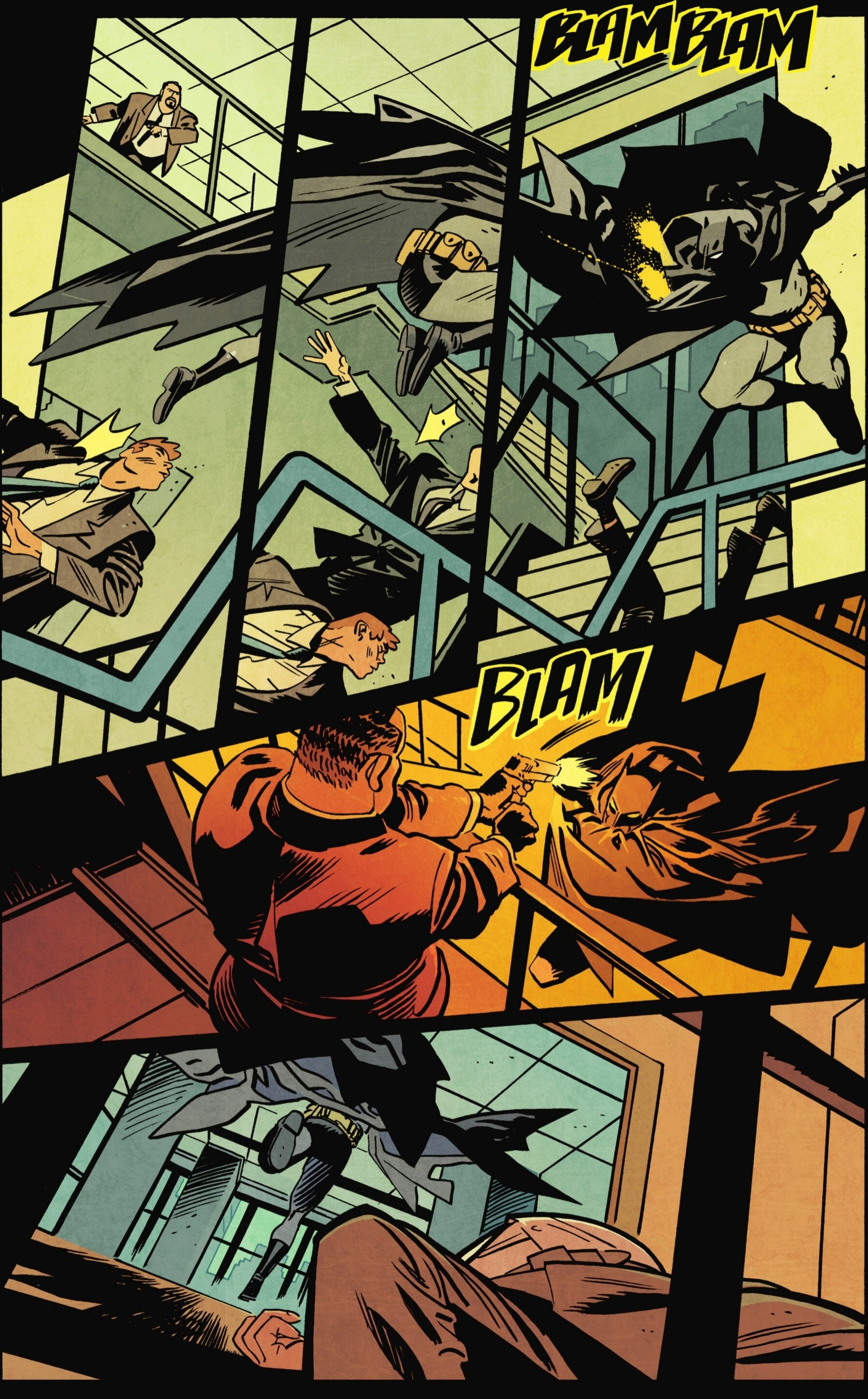

THAT DAY... I MERGED WITH METAL.
AND I WAS NEVER THE SAME.
NOT MAN... *NOT MACHINE...*
BUT SOMETHING... *ADAPTIVE.*

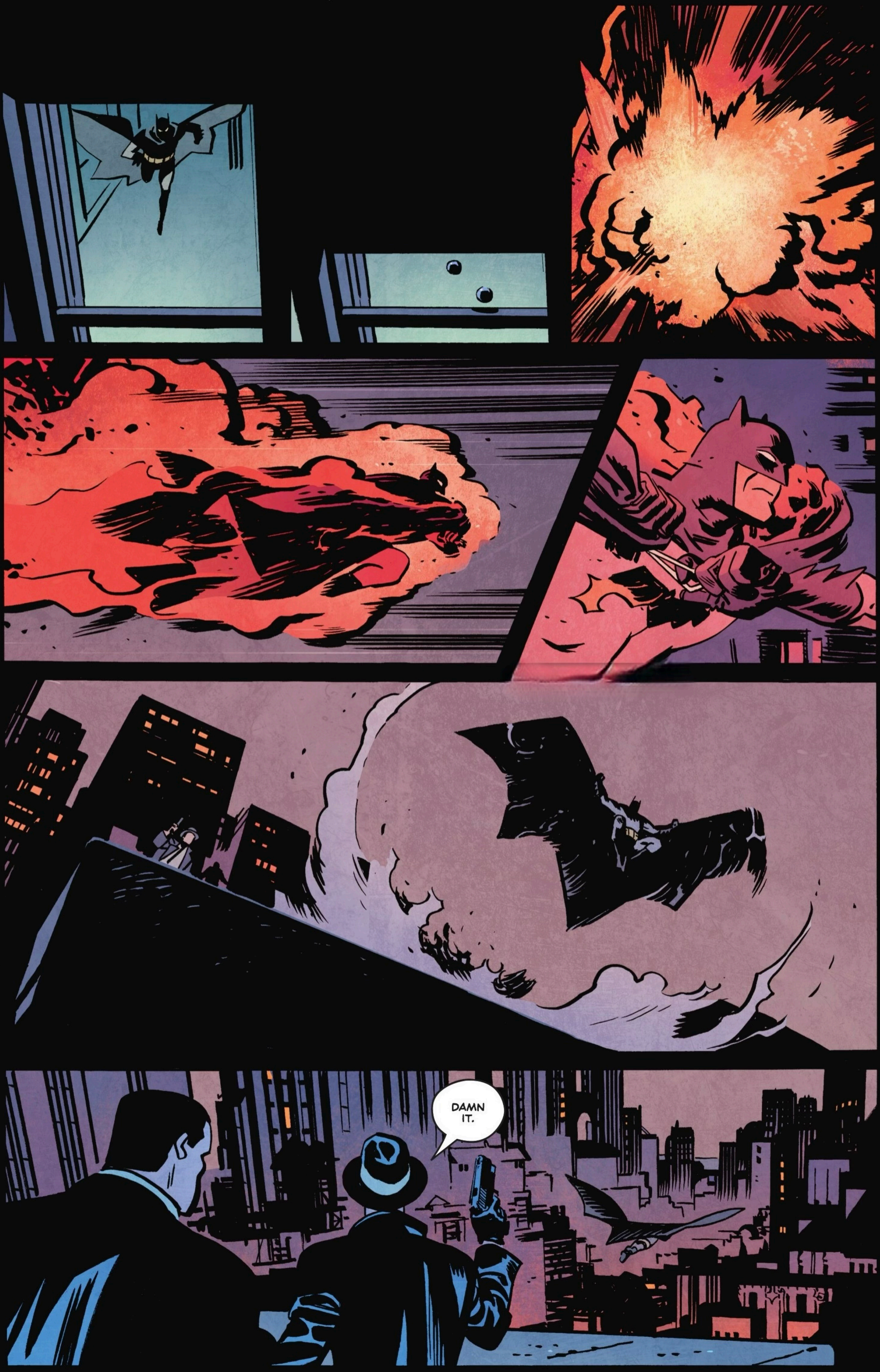

CAUGHT EMBEZZLING. FOREIGN FUNDS.
SHAMELESS.
THAT'S THE STORY THEY TOLD YOU?
I DIDN'T STEAL ANYTHING...
I *REASSIGNED* IT.
PEOPLE LIKE HIM DON'T UNDERSTAND VALUE.
THEY ONLY UNDERSTAND... *IDENTITY.*
SYMBIOTIC ABILITIES.
I CAN BECOME...
ANY FACE I *DESIRE.*

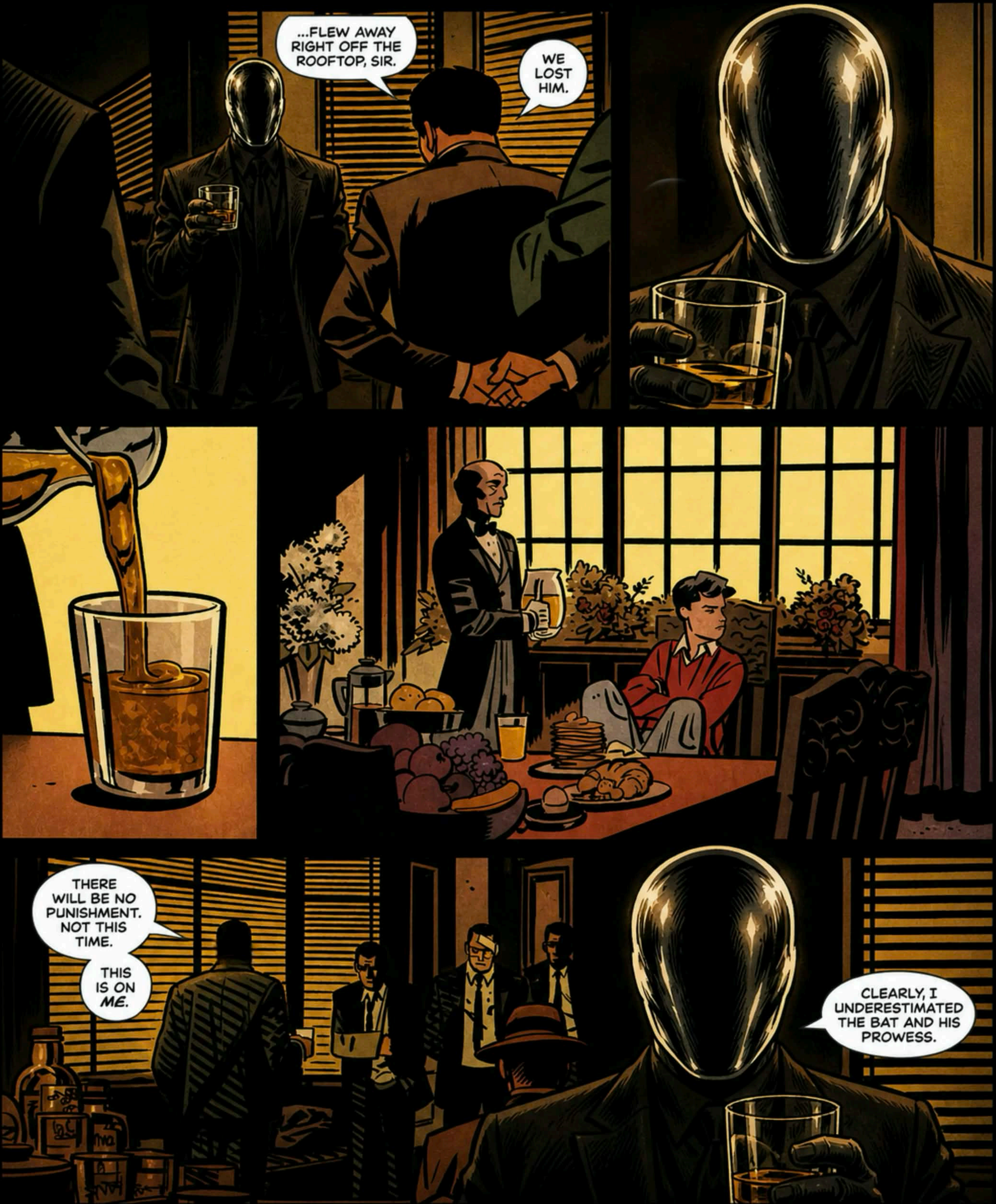

ANY IDENTITY.
...EXCEPT MY OWN.
YOU CAME HERE EXPECTING CORRUPTION.
BUT GOTHAM...
...IS JUST A CITY OF MIRRORS.
TAK
WE'LL SEE WHICH ONE YOU ARE.


SSHHFFF
GET HIM.
snap
BLAM
KRNCH!


THERE HE *IS!*
SHOOT HIM!
AAAAH!
GET 'EM OFF, *GET 'EM OFFFFF!*
ROOF ACCESS

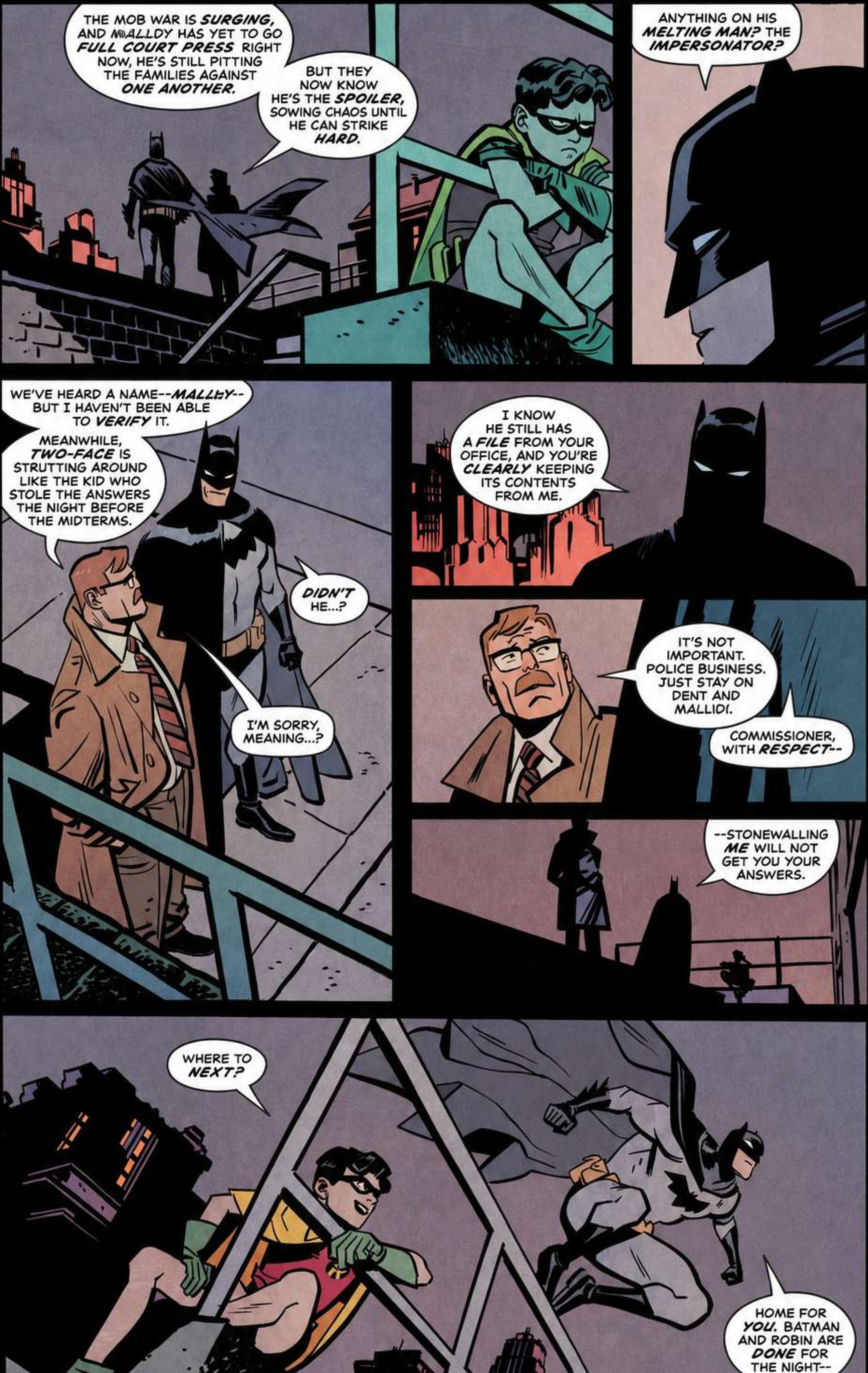

BLAM BLAM
BLAM


DAMN IT.


...FLEW AWAY RIGHT OFF THE ROOFTOP, SIR.
WE LOST HIM.
THERE WILL BE NO PUNISHMENT. NOT THIS TIME.
THIS IS ON *ME*.
CLEARLY, I UNDERESTIMATED THE BAT AND HIS PROWESS.

CHAPTER 5

HHHH
TAKE YOUR TIME.
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE OUT TO CATCH CRIMINALS, YOU KN--
DON'T DESPAIR, COMMISSION-AIRE!
ROBIN AND BATMAN TO THE RESCUE!
CLUES SOLVED, CRIME WAVES STOPPED!
YOU SEE AN "R" ON THIS THING?
I WAS HOPING WE COULD TALK PRIVATELY.
OF COURSE, COMMISSIONER.
WAIT HERE, ROBIN.
QUIETLY.


THE MOB WAR IS *SURGING*, AND MALLDY HAS YET TO GO *FULL COURT PRESS* RIGHT NOW, HE'S STILL PITTING THE FAMILIES AGAINST *ONE ANOTHER*.
BUT THEY NOW KNOW HE'S THE *SPOILER*, SOWING CHAOS UNTIL HE CAN STRIKE *HARD*.
ANYTHING ON HIS *MELTING MAN?* THE *IMPERSONATOR?*
WE'VE HEARD A NAME--*MALLDY*-- BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO *VERIFY* IT.
MEANWHILE, *TWO-FACE* IS STRUTTING AROUND LIKE THE KID WHO STOLE THE ANSWERS THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MIDTERMS.
DIDN'T HE...?
I'M SORRY, MEANING...?
I KNOW HE STILL HAS A *FILE* FROM YOUR OFFICE, AND YOU'RE *CLEARLY* KEEPING ITS CONTENTS FROM ME.
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT. POLICE BUSINESS. JUST STAY ON DENT AND MALLIDI.
COMMISSIONER, WITH *RESPECT*--
--STONEWALLING *ME* WILL NOT GET YOU YOUR ANSWERS.
WHERE TO *NEXT?*
HOME FOR *YOU*. BATMAN AND ROBIN ARE *DONE* FOR THE NIGHT--

"--AND BRUCE WAYNE HAS A SOCIAL OBLIGATION."
MARTIN KOSKI! YOU'VE GOT ALL OF GOTHAM SOCIETY POSITIVELY REELING!
PILLAR OF THE CITY--HOOD ORNAMENT TO ITS NIGHTLIFE--AND YET HERE WE ARE AT YOUR FAREWELL PARTY.
WHY WOULD YOU EVER LIVE OVERSEAS?
I KNOW IT'S ABRUPT, WAYNE...
...BUT I GOT LUCKY. TIMED THE MARKETS PERFECTLY TO SELL THE COMPANY AND A COMPLEX SET OF HOLDINGS...
INCLUDING WAYNE INDUSTRIES.
GUILTY, HA.
BRUCE, DEAR, FETCH ME ANOTHER DRINK...?
IN A MOMENT, TIFFANI. I NEED ANOTHER WORD WITH OUR HOST.
ARE YOU IN DEEP WITH THE PONIES AGAIN? NEED CASH? IF SO--
HA! NO!
IT'S JUST TIME FOR A CHANGE, WAYNE. DROP IN WHENEVER YOU'RE NEAR ITALY, I MEAN IT.
NOW PLEASE ENJOY THE PARTY. I SHOULD CIRCULATE.
OF...
...COURSE.
BE GOOD, WAYNE!
WILL DO, "MARTIN."

ReadComicOnline.to

MR. GRAYSON, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PREPARING FOR YOU A RATHER SUMPTUOUS--
OH DEAR.

BYE, MARTY...!
BETTER HAVE A LIE-DOWN, KIPP.
FAREWELL, FRIENDS--
--AND THANK YOU, *EVERYONE,* FOR THE MOST *DELIGHTFUL* SEND-OFF! I'D BETTER SEE YOU *ALL* IN TUSCANY!
Friendly and smiling to their **faces**--
--and **scowling** once they've **gone**.
I didn't **think** that was the genuine Martin. Now I **know**.
The **real** one would maintain the front with no one **watching**, conning **himself** along with everyone else. Insecure beyond measuring.
Meaning, if **that's** not **Martin**--

And if that's accurate--
--poor Martin.
IT'S OVER, HAGEN.

STOP!
SKRAAR --NNY-1 TO BATMAN! PENNY-1 TO BATMAN!
Not a good time. I need silence.
KLIK
BARRICADED IN THE CLOSET? BAD IDEA, MELTING MAN.
YOU'RE CORNERED.
BLAM BLAM

I REPEAT-- ROBIN IS GONE, AS IS ONE OF THE BATBIKES.
PICK UP, SIR, PLEASE. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. AS OF 42 MINUTES AGO--
"--I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THE BOY IS."
A PERSON COULD DIE OF DISAPPOINTMENT IN THIS BURG. WHY IS EVERYBODY SO LAW-ABIDING TONIGHT?
AND HOW COME THERE'S NEVER A CROOKED FACE AROUND WHEN YOU'RE IN A PUNCHING MOOD?
BRAT'S ALONE. IT'S OUR CHANCE TO IMPRESS GRIMALDI. CALL FOR BACKUP.
AIN'T WE ENOUGH? HE'S JUST A KID.
YOU AIN'T SEEN HIM MOVE. I HAVE.
CALL.

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
SLOPPY **WORK,** HAGEN.
YOUR RESEARCH IS OUTDATED. I HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT KOSKI HAD HIS ***WRIST TATTOO*** REMOVED A ***WEEK*** AGO.
HOW MUCH DID GRIMALDI GET FROM HAVING YOU LIQUIDATE KOSKI'S ASSETS? AND WHAT'S ***YOUR*** CUT?
SOCK

NO USE *RUNNING,* HAGEN.
I'VE *GOT* YOU.
WH--?

PROSTHETIC?
Has to be, right?
Already back on his... foot and storming fast.
SSIP
The mask. The silence. The **strangeness**. He thinks they give him power.
But that combo won't work on **me**.
I **invented** it.

YOU'RE *DONE,* HAGEN.
I'M NOT LETTING GO.
And here it is.
The melting trick.
No, not melting. Not even warm.
Feels like--
--clay--!
HUUKK

HELP!
SHUT UP! WALLET. PHONE. WATCH. NOW. OR I PAINT THE ALLEY RED.
PLEASE...
COME ON, HE SAID "PLEASE." WHAT DOES THE MAN HAVE TO DO?
ARE MANNERS DEAD IN THIS TOWN?
NO, BUT YOU ARE.
YOU'RE THE VICTIM.
VICTIMS DON'T SAY THAT.
YOU'RE THE VICTIM NOW, PUNK.

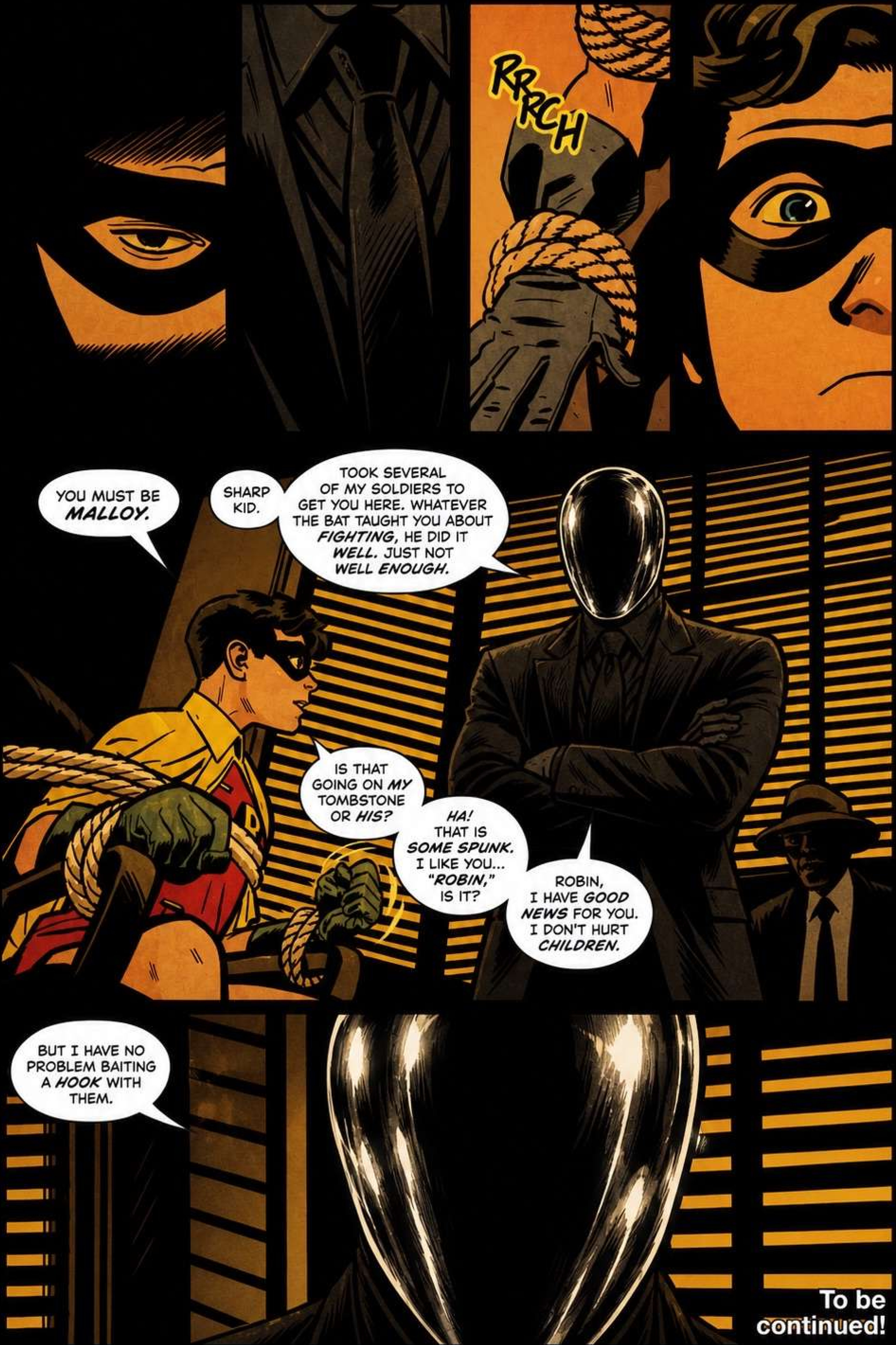
I GET IT NOW. THE MUGGING--
--WAS A *TRAP?* FOR *ME?*
I'M *FLATTERED!*
WHOA! LOOK AT ALL THOSE *REINFORCEMENTS!* THIS GETS MORE *FUN* BY THE *MINUTE.*
AND *SADDER.* I MEAN, HOW MANY *MADE MEN* DOES IT *TAKE* TO BRING DOWN ONE ADORABLY TWO-FISTED KID?
A HUNDRED?
A *THOUSAND?*
ONE.

GOT HIM. *EASY* AS--
BLAM BLAM
CHEATERS.
FUMP
WHAK
IN A *FAIR FIGHT,* YOU'D ALL BE--

HUCCH
KCCCH
Clay
Throat
KHUK KUKK
Line. Where
The line
Pull.
Pull.

PULL...!
PLAP
KAFF
HUCHH
HURRR
KAFF
It takes too long to recover. By the time I turn around...

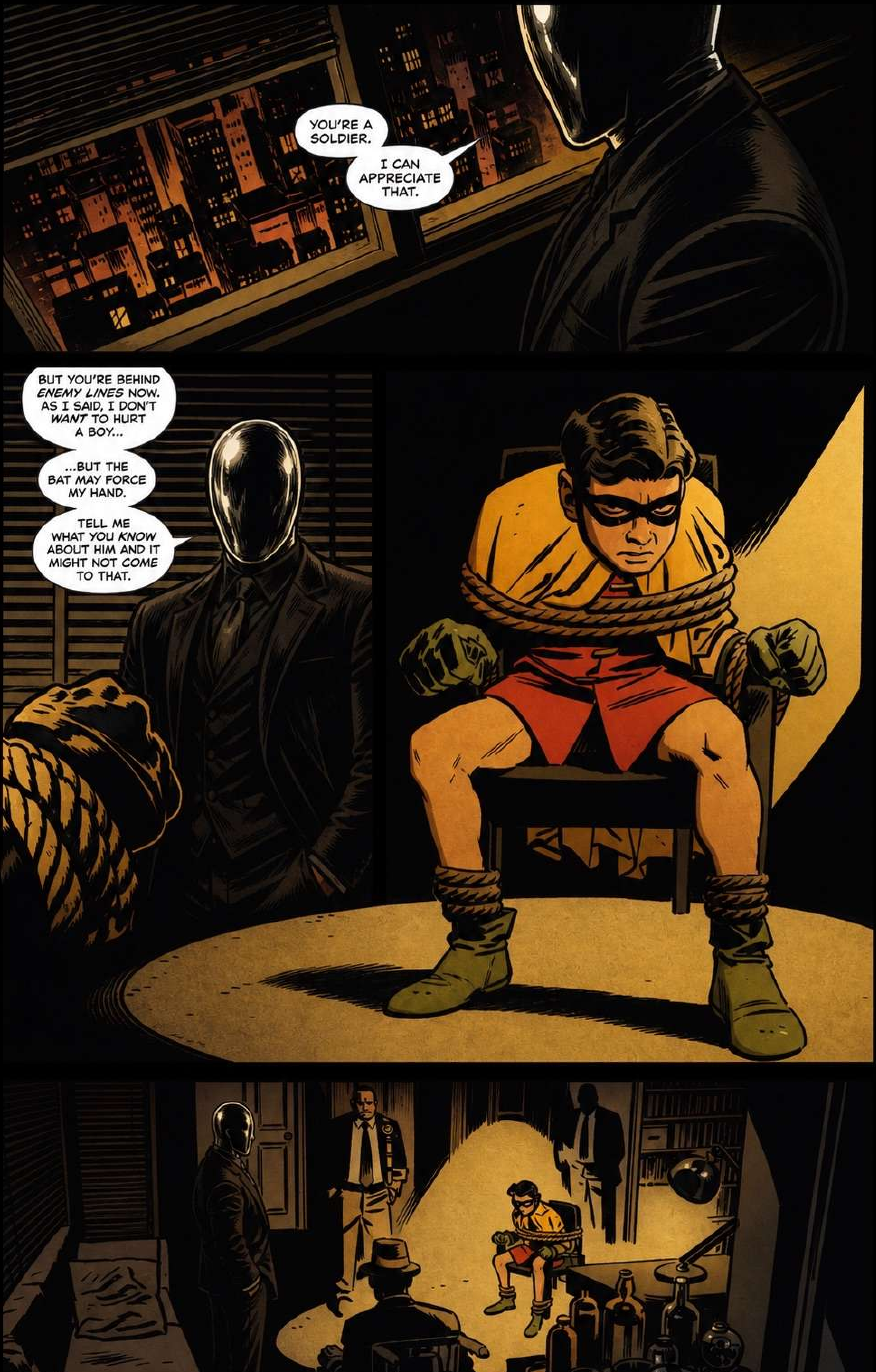
HAGEN!
...he's gone.
But I hope it sunk in deep even he couldn't kill the Batman.
ALFRED.
ALFRED WAS CALLING.
KLIK
BATMAN TO PENNY-1.
BATMAN TO PENNY-1.
BATMAN TO PENNY--
WHERE IN GOD'S NAME HAVE YOU BEEN?
THE BOY IS GONE!

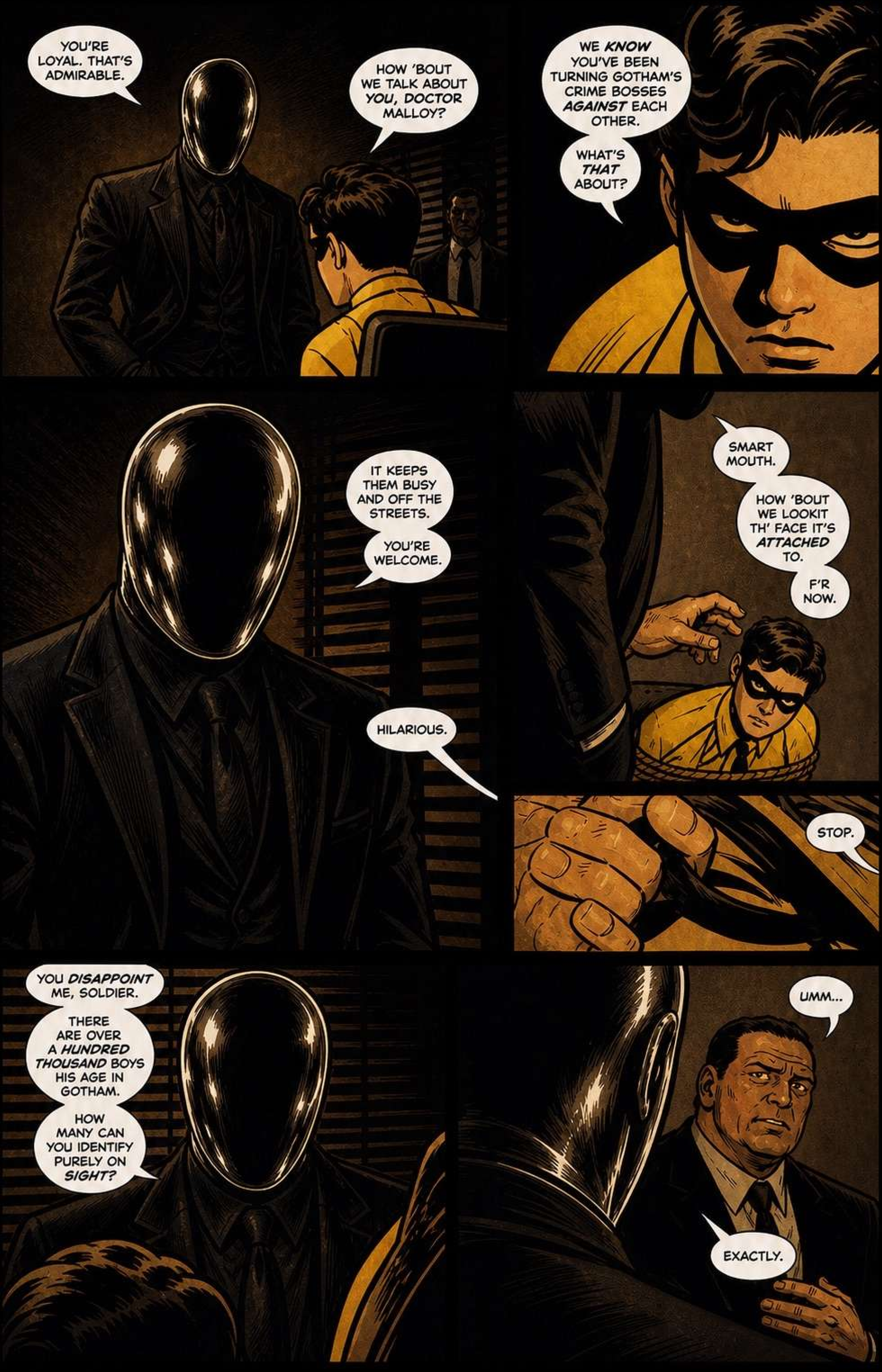

RRRCH
YOU MUST BE *MALLOY.*
SHARP KID.
TOOK SEVERAL OF MY SOLDIERS TO GET YOU HERE. WHATEVER THE BAT TAUGHT YOU ABOUT *FIGHTING,* HE DID IT *WELL.* JUST NOT *WELL ENOUGH.*
IS THAT GOING ON *MY* TOMBSTONE OR *HIS?*
HA! THAT IS *SOME SPUNK.* I LIKE YOU... *"ROBIN,"* IS IT?
ROBIN, I HAVE *GOOD NEWS* FOR YOU. I DON'T HURT *CHILDREN.*
BUT I HAVE NO PROBLEM BAITING A *HOOK* WITH THEM.
To be continued!

CHAPTER 6

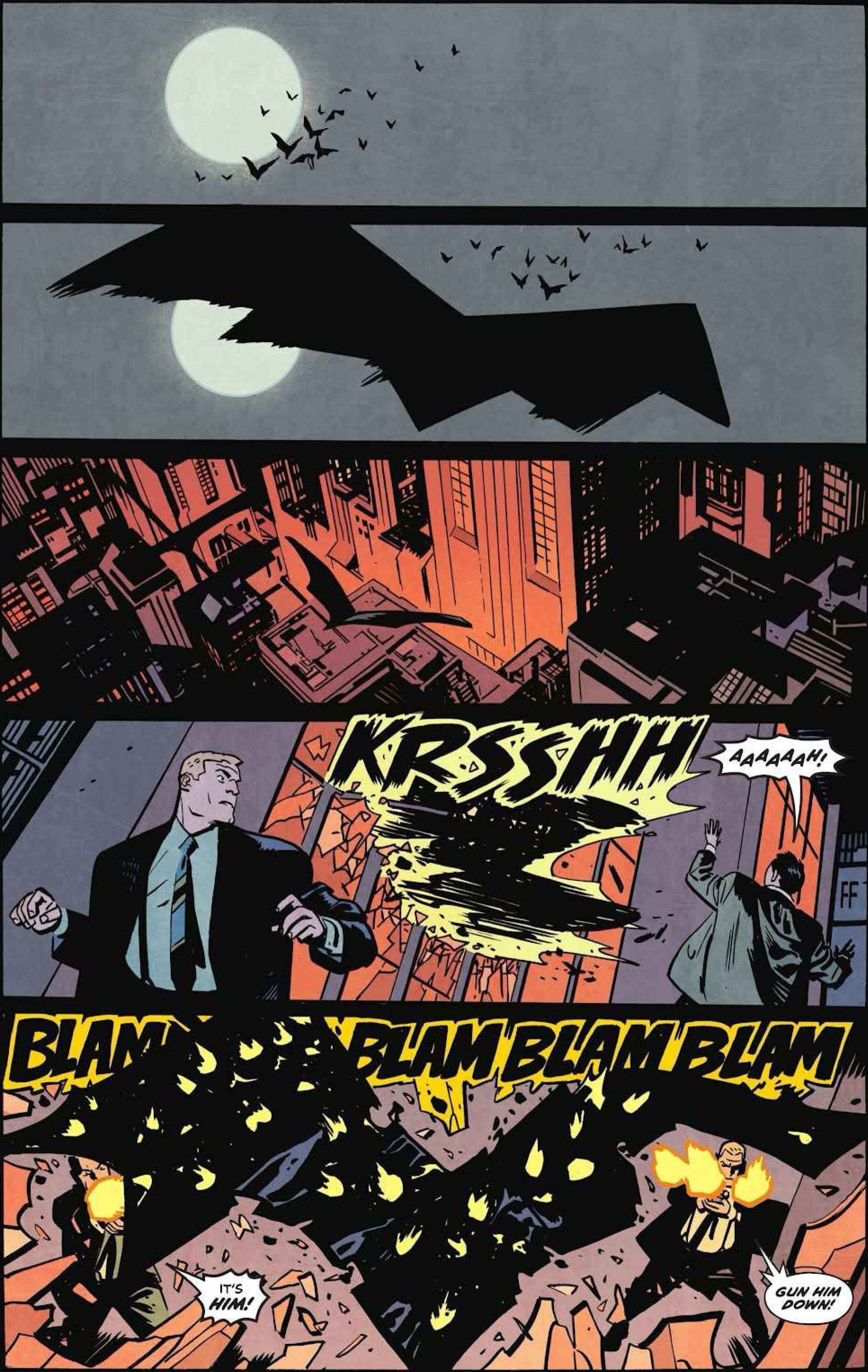
"Boss" Zucco never got a second chance to leverage Haly's Circus.
Not after that night.
We made sure of it.

That was only a few weeks ago. I took the boy in to help him channel his trauma.
To keep him safe.
WAITING.
GRIMALDI
Up to now, we've been lucky.
But tonight, he took off on his own...
...and our luck's run out.
SIR, THE MOTORBIKE'S TRACER SHOULD HAVE LED YOU TO IT BY NOW! PLEASE TELL ME YOU'VE FOUND MISTER GRAYSON!
NOT YET.
BUT AT LEAST I KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.

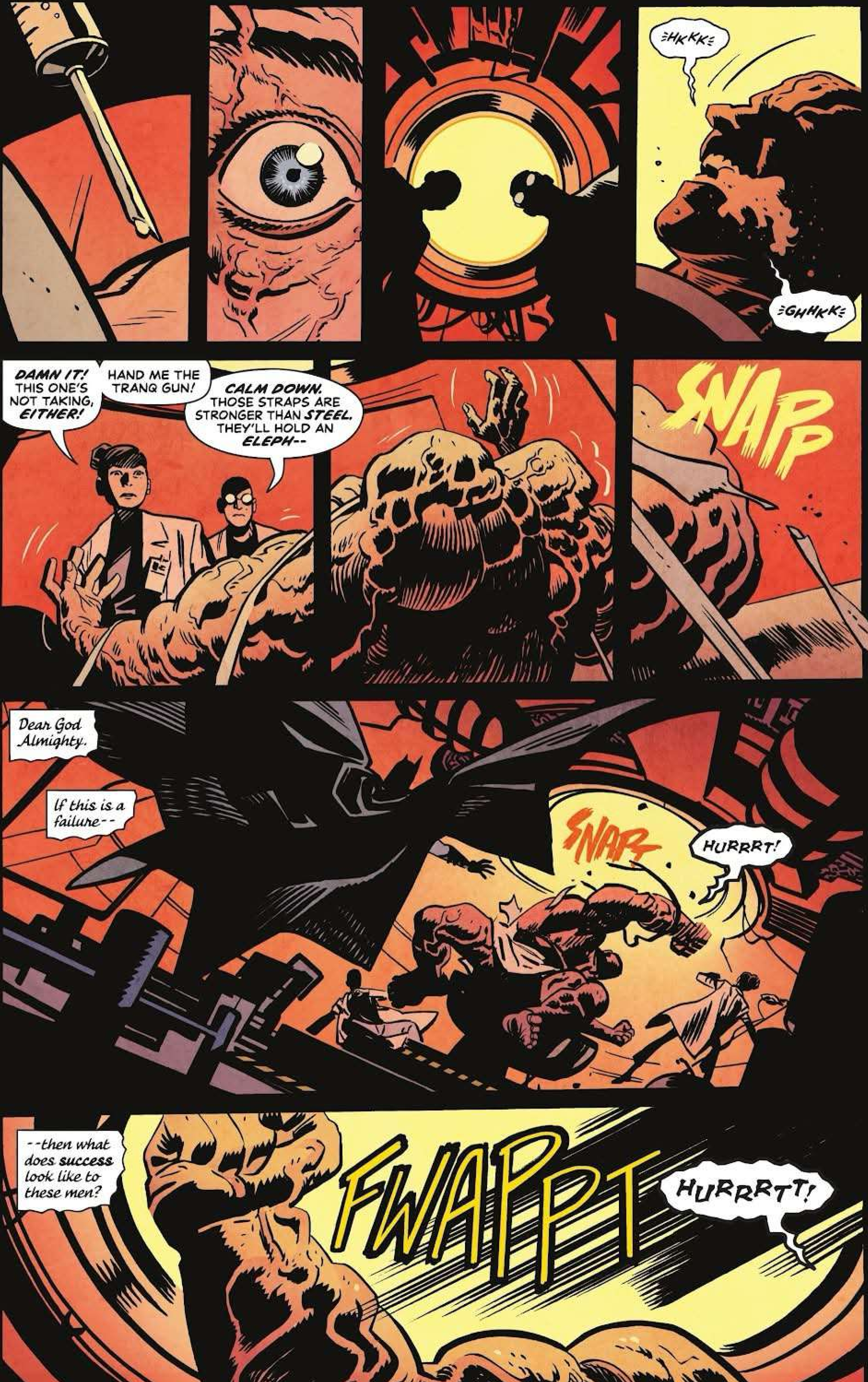

YOU'RE A SOLDIER.
I CAN APPRECIATE THAT.
BUT YOU'RE BEHIND *ENEMY LINES* NOW. AS I SAID, I DON'T *WANT* TO HURT A BOY...
...BUT THE BAT *MAY* FORCE MY HAND.
TELL ME WHAT *YOU KNOW* ABOUT HIM AND IT MIGHT NOT COME TO THAT.


YOU'RE LOYAL. THAT'S ADMIRABLE.
HOW 'BOUT WE TALK ABOUT *YOU, DOCTOR* MALLOY?
WE *KNOW* YOU'VE BEEN TURNING GOTHAM'S CRIME BOSSES *AGAINST* EACH OTHER.
WHAT'S *THAT* ABOUT?
IT KEEPS THEM BUSY AND OFF THE STREETS.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
HILARIOUS.
SMART MOUTH.
HOW 'BOUT WE LOOKIT TH' FACE IT'S *ATTACHED* TO.
F'R NOW.
STOP.
YOU *DISAPPOINT* ME, SOLDIER.
THERE ARE OVER A *HUNDRED THOUSAND* BOYS HIS AGE IN GOTHAM.
HOW MANY CAN YOU IDENTIFY PURELY ON *SIGHT?*
UMM...
EXACTLY.

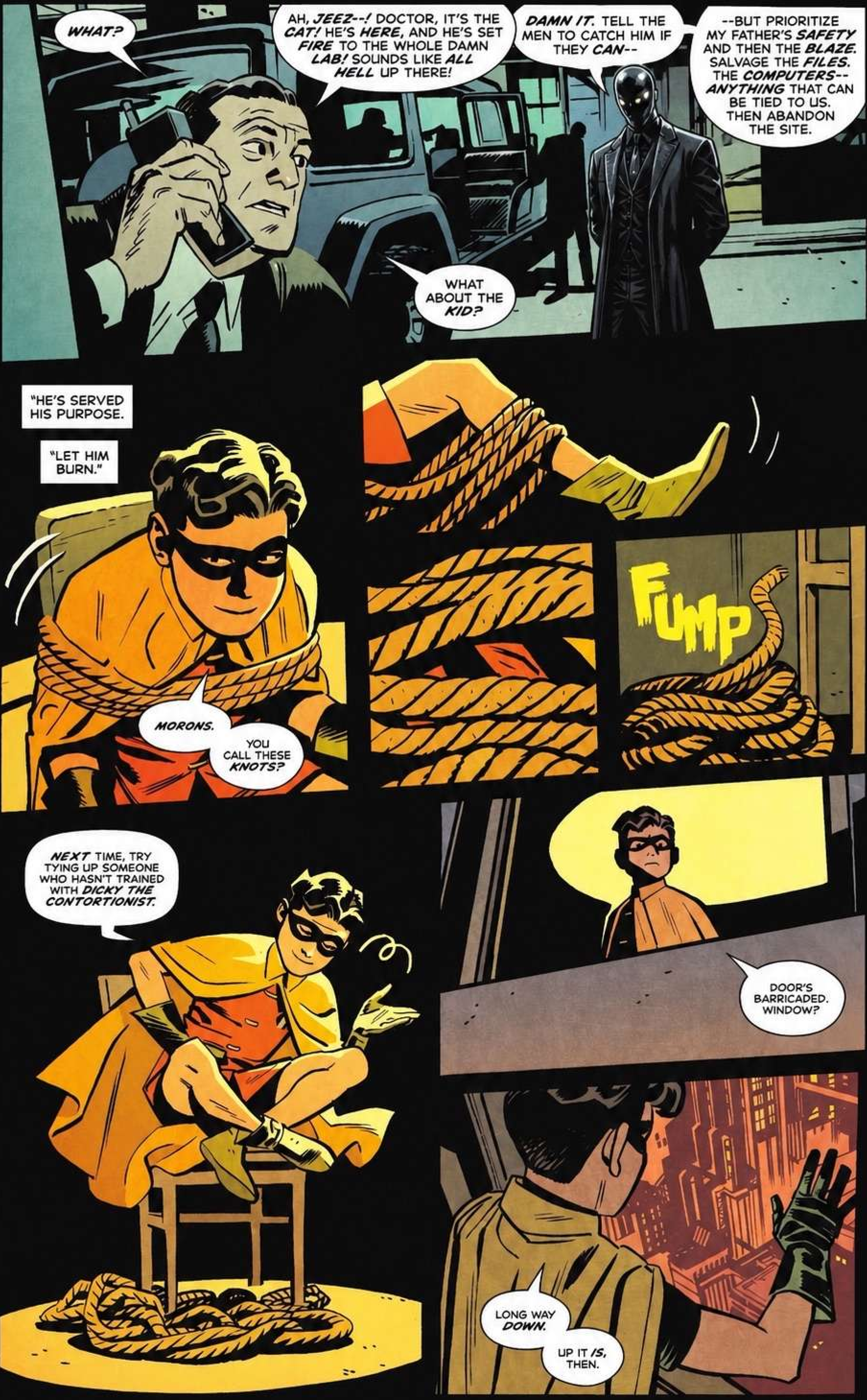
WHY WASTE TIME WITH HIM WHEN WE CAN SIMPLY UNMASK THE *BAT* ONCE HE ARRIVES?
YOU THINK IT'S THAT SIMPLE?
BATMAN'S GONNA *SCAIL* THIS *WHOLE PLACE.*
GONNA *WHAT?*
SORRY, GUESS THEY DON'T TEACH *VOCABULARY* AT THE ZOO.
LEAVE HIM BE. IT DOESN'T MATTER *WHO* HE IS.
ALL THAT MATTERS IS *WHAT* HE IS.
A *LURE.*
SEE YA... *SMART MOUTH.*
KLIK KLAKT

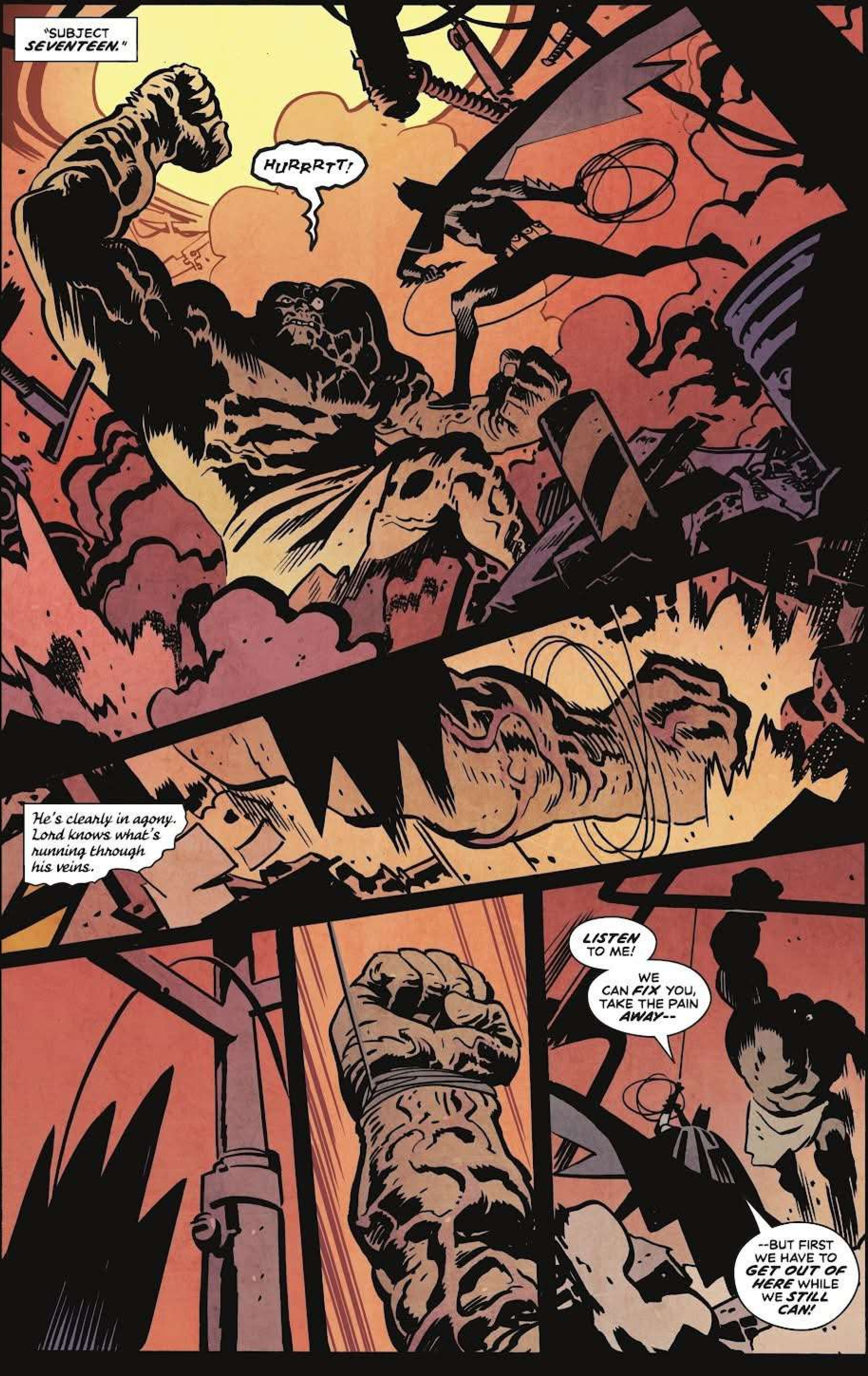

KRSSHH
AAAAAAH!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
IT'S HIM!
GUN HIM DOWN!

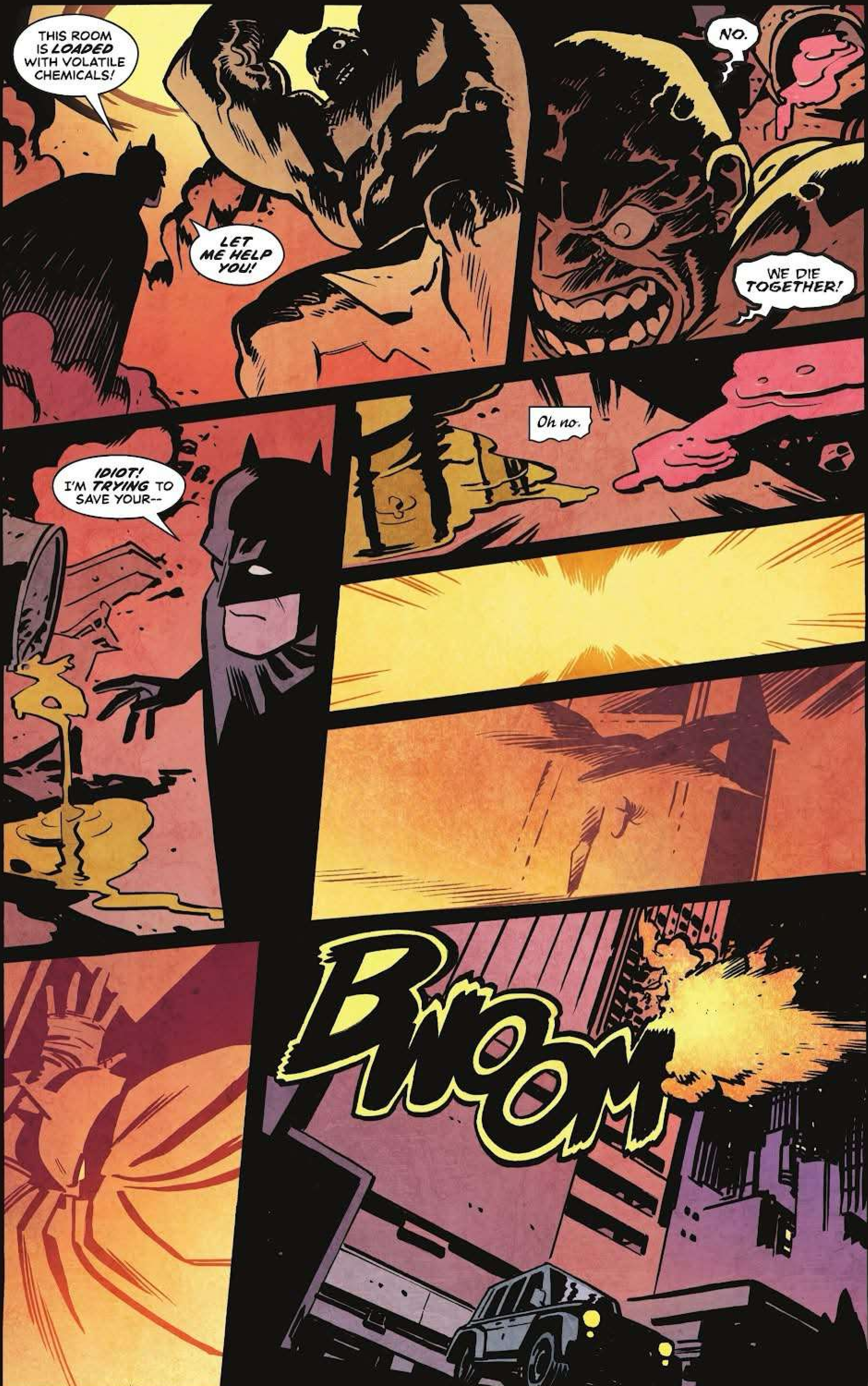
WHAT THE &*%☆#?
IT'S JUSTA BIG %&+☆# *KITE!*
IT'S A *DECOY* IS WHAT IT IS!
SURE AS HELL, WHILE WE WAS LOOKIN' *HERE--*
"--HE WAS COMIN' IN SOME *OTHER* WAY!"
This, I hadn't expected.
The informant who spilled on [illegible] location said **nothing** about a chemical laboratory.
A huge one, well-equipped. Narcotics?
No. Wrong materials. **Whatever's** going on, though, it's big.
And, judging by how tightly that patient is strapped down, **unpleasant.**
VOLUNTEER SUBJECT SEVENTEEN.
ADMINISTER FINAL INJECTION.


HKKK
GHHKK
DAMN IT! THIS ONE'S NOT TAKING, EITHER!
HAND ME THE TRANQ GUN!
CALM DOWN. THOSE STRAPS ARE STRONGER THAN STEEL. THEY'LL HOLD AN ELEPH--
SNAPP
Dear God Almighty.
If this is a failure--
SNAP
HURRRT!
--then what does success look like to these men?
FWAPPT
HURRRTT!

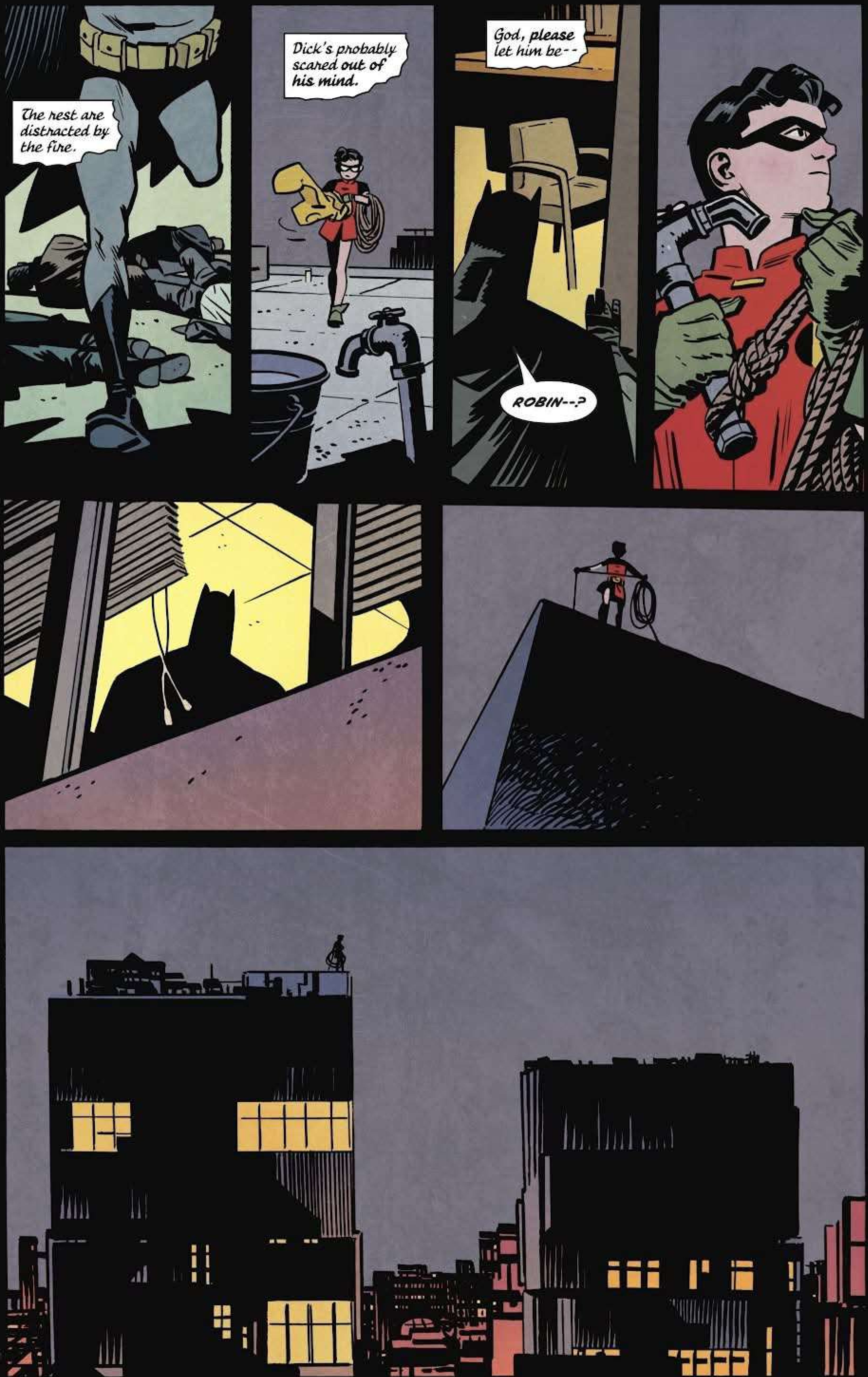
RUN.
HE'LL KILL US!
ALL THE MORE REASON.
HHHHURRT!
HHHURRTT BAAAT!

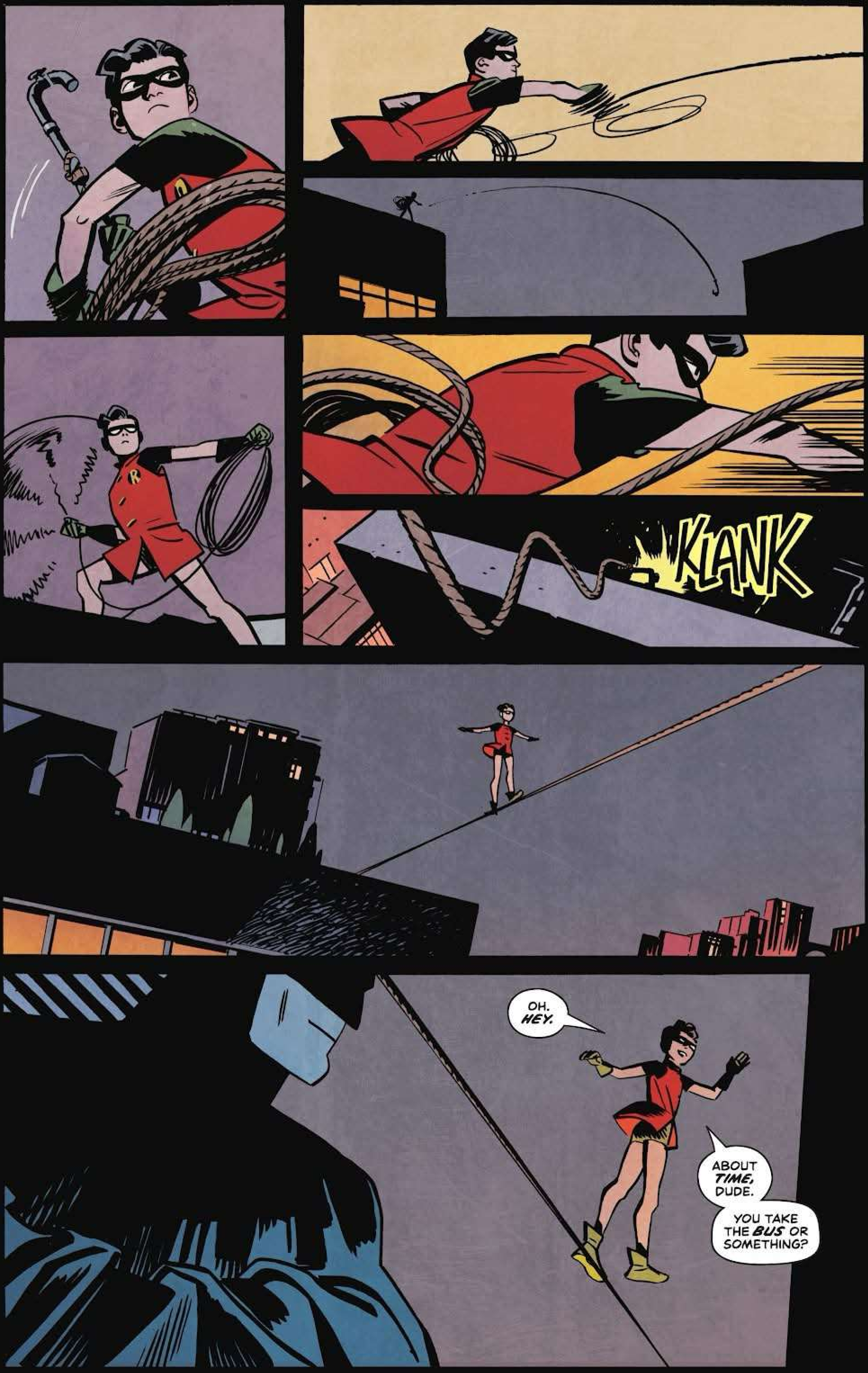

WHAT?
AH, JEEZ--! DOCTOR, IT'S THE CAT! HE'S HERE, AND HE'S SET FIRE TO THE WHOLE DAMN LAB! SOUNDS LIKE ALL HELL UP THERE!
DAMN IT. TELL THE MEN TO CATCH HIM IF THEY CAN--
--BUT PRIORITIZE MY FATHER'S SAFETY AND THEN THE BLAZE. SALVAGE THE FILES. THE COMPUTERS--ANYTHING THAT CAN BE TIED TO US. THEN ABANDON THE SITE.
WHAT ABOUT THE KID?
"HE'S SERVED HIS PURPOSE.
"LET HIM BURN."
MORONS.
YOU CALL THESE KNOTS?
FUMP
NEXT TIME, TRY TYING UP SOMEONE WHO HASN'T TRAINED WITH DICKY THE CONTORTIONIST.
DOOR'S BARRICADED. WINDOW?
LONG WAY DOWN.
UP IT IS, THEN.


"SUBJECT SEVENTEEN."
HURRRTT!
He's clearly in agony. Lord knows what's running through his veins.
LISTEN TO ME!
WE CAN FIX YOU, TAKE THE PAIN AWAY--
--BUT FIRST WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE WHILE WE STILL CAN!


THIS ROOM IS LOADED WITH VOLATILE CHEMICALS!
LET ME HELP YOU!
NO.
WE DIE TOGETHER!
IDIOT! I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOUR--
Oh no.
BROOM

Flames are climbing fast. I have to find him.
ROBIN!
ROBIN, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
IF YOU'VE HURT HIM, I SWEAR YOU WILL PAY!
WHERE IS HE?

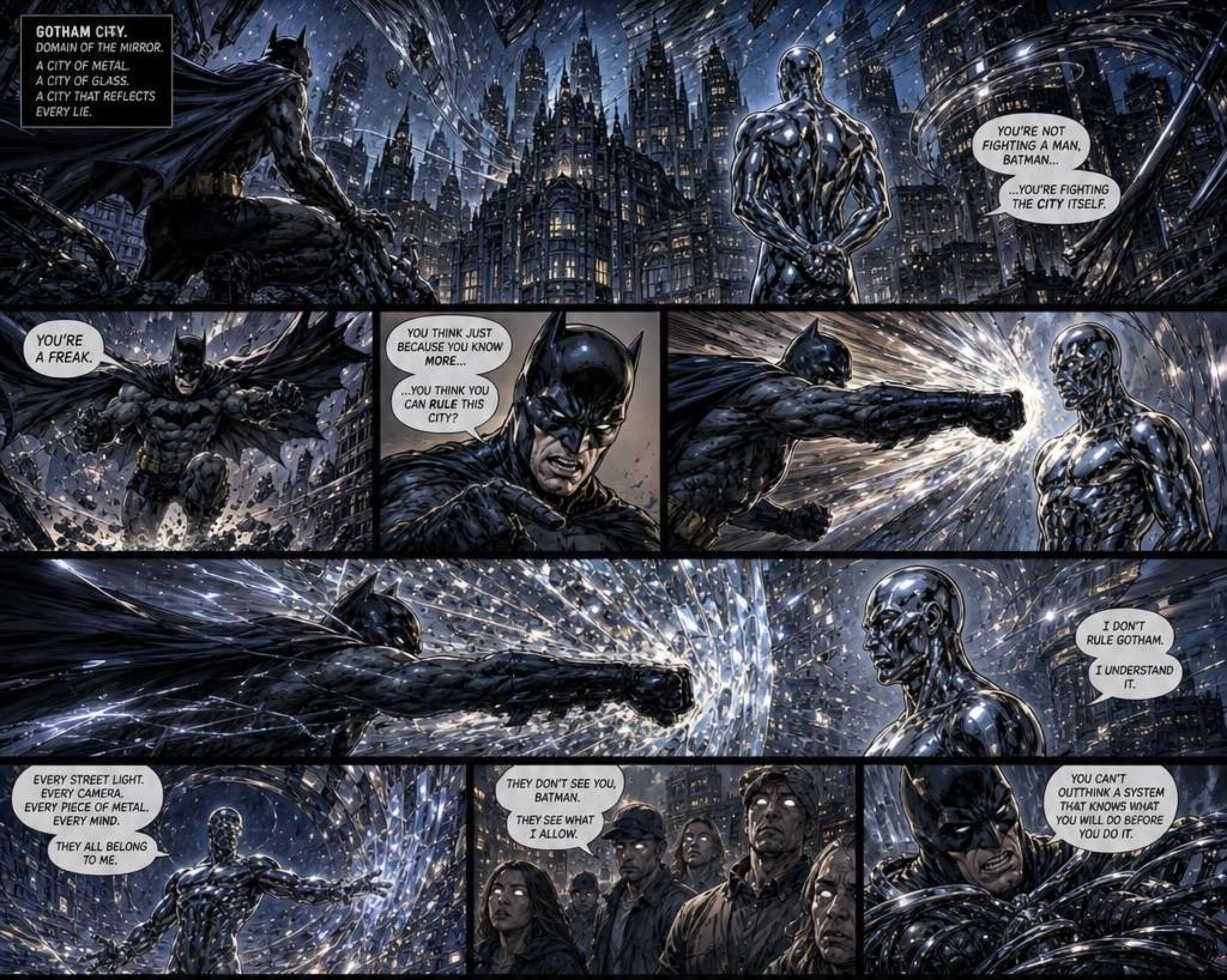

The rest are distracted by the fire.
Dick's probably scared **out of his mind.**
God, **please** let him be--
ROBIN--?

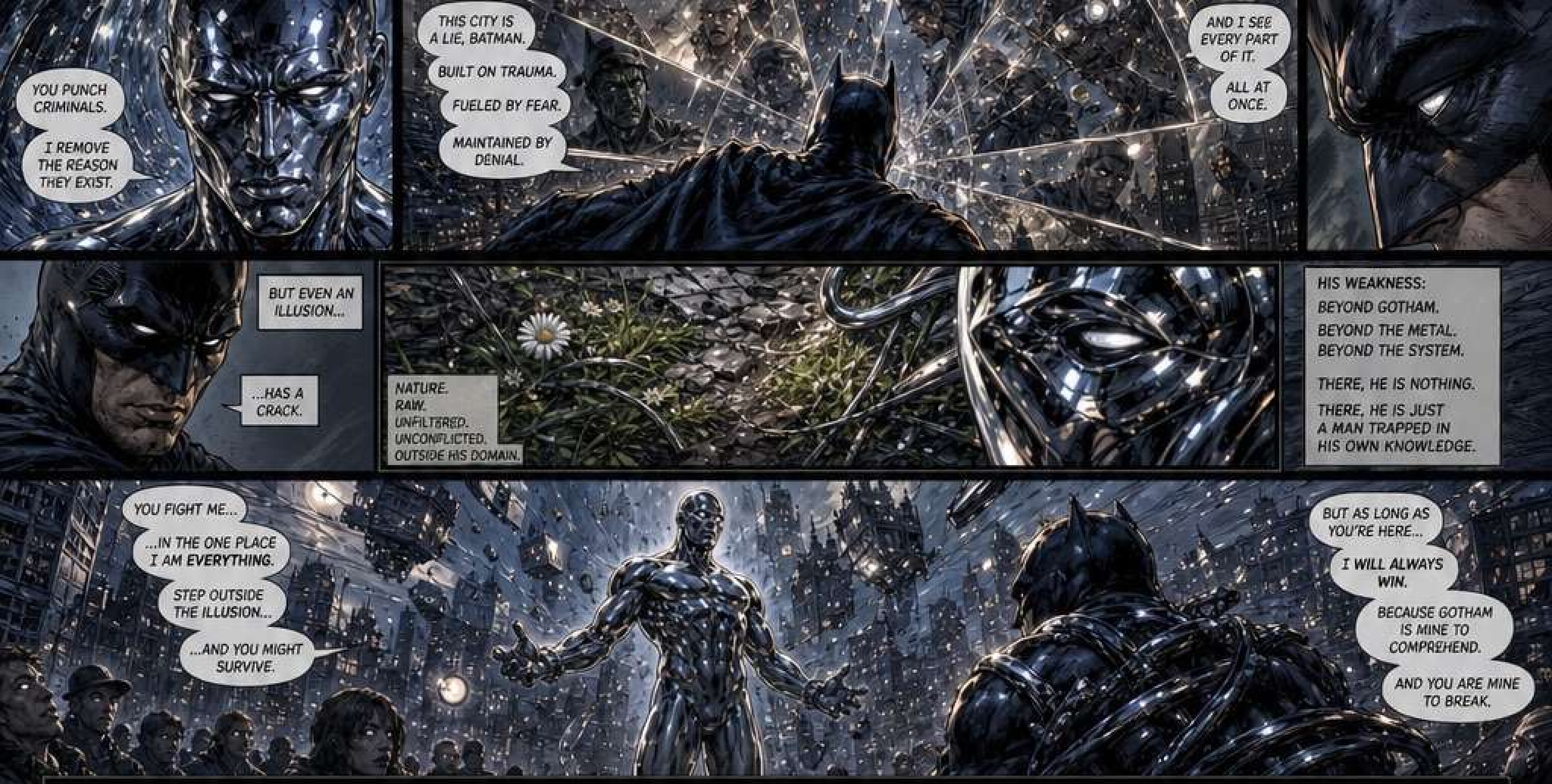

KLANK
OH. *HEY.*
ABOUT *TIME,* DUDE.
YOU TAKE THE *BUS* OR SOMETHING?

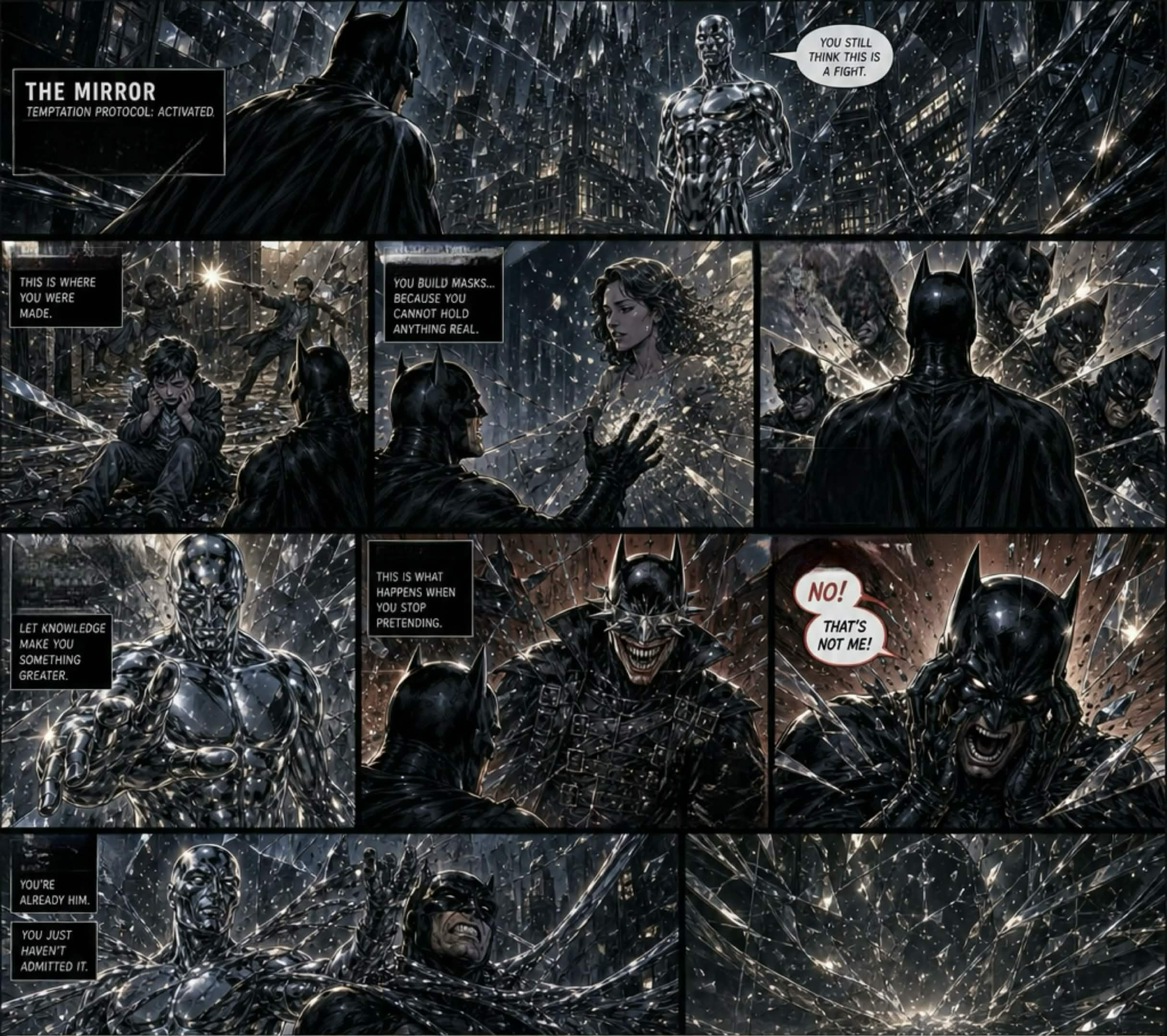
CHAPTER 7

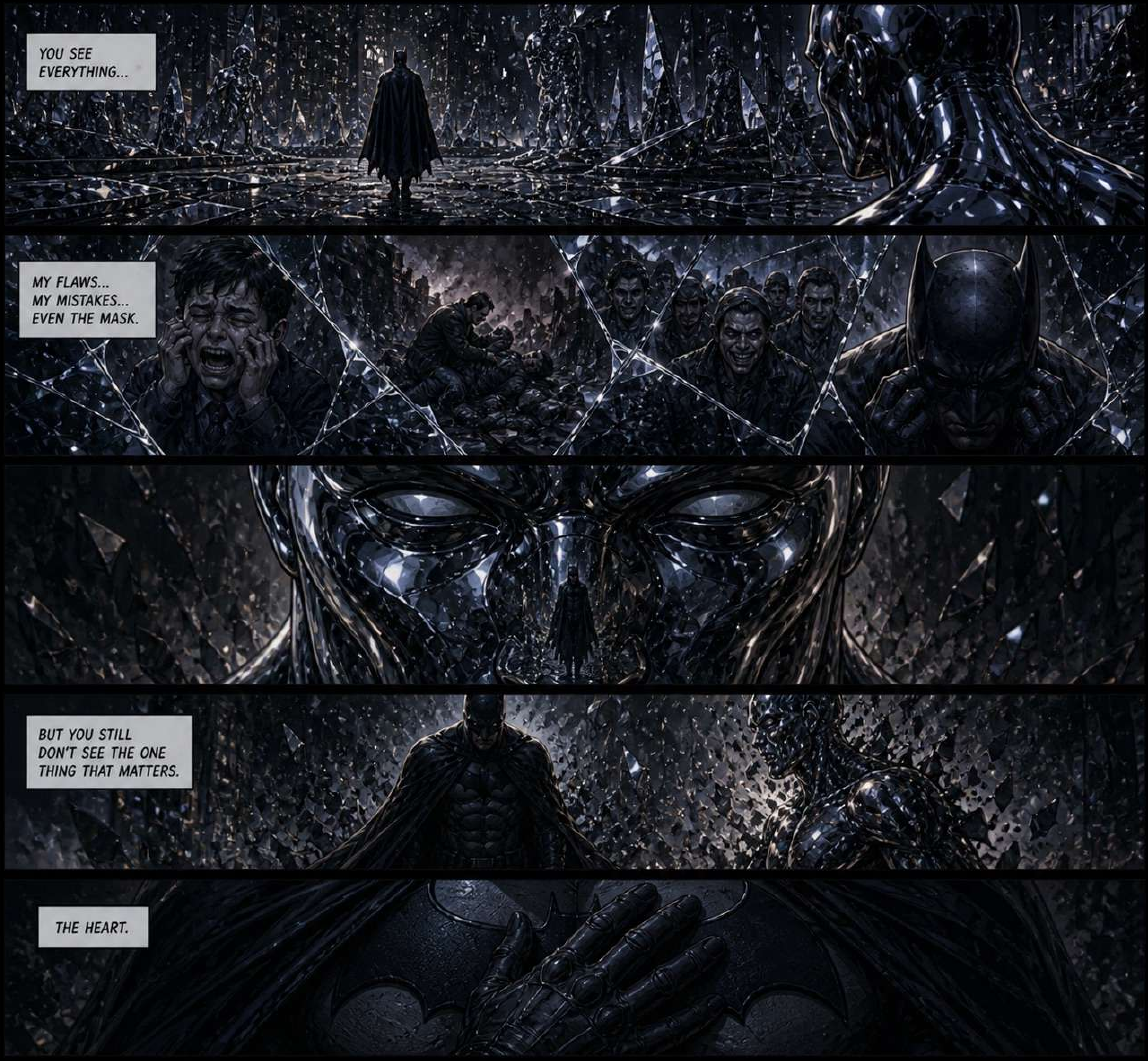
GOTHAM HAS CHANGED.
SO... WE'RE *REALLY* DOING THIS?
WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
HE SEES EVERYTHING... RIGHT?
NO.
HE *THINKS* HE DOES.
THWIP
THWIP
...DID YOU SEE THAT?
YOU BROUGHT A PARTNER.
WHERE IS HE?!

THE MIRROR
FINAL BATTLE.
BEHOLD!
BATMAN...
MY FINAL FORM.
MAGNIFICENT.
I AM THE REFLECTION OF EVERYTHING YOU REFUSE TO ACCEPT.
EVERY LIE. EVERY FEAR. EVERY CHOICE YOU RUN FROM.
I SHAPE THIS CITY.
ITS STREETS.
ITS STEEL.
ITS SOUL.
I AM GOTHAM'S TRUTH MADE FLESH.
AND TODAY—
I SHATTER THE ILLUSION OF THE BAT.
FOREVER.
GLASS.
METAL.
BOTH BOW TO ME..
NOTHING IS BEYOND REFLECTION.
THIS ENDS NOW.
WHATEVER YOU ARE...
...WE ARE WHAT YOU'LL NEVER BREAK.
THEN COME.
LET US SEE WHICH REFLECTION SURVIVES.
THE MIRROR AWAITS.
R


GOTHAM CITY.
DOMAIN OF THE MIRROR.
A CITY OF METAL. A CITY OF GLASS. A CITY THAT REFLECTS EVERY LIE.
YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING A MAN, BATMAN...
...YOU'RE FIGHTING THE CITY ITSELF.
YOU'RE A FREAK.
YOU THINK JUST BECAUSE YOU KNOW MORE...
...YOU THINK YOU CAN RULE THIS CITY?
I DON'T RULE GOTHAM.
I UNDERSTAND IT.
EVERY STREET LIGHT. EVERY CAMERA. EVERY PIECE OF METAL. EVERY MIND.
THEY ALL BELONG TO ME.
THEY DON'T SEE YOU, BATMAN.
THEY SEE WHAT I ALLOW.
YOU CAN'T OUTTHINK A SYSTEM THAT KNOWS WHAT YOU WILL DO BEFORE YOU DO IT.

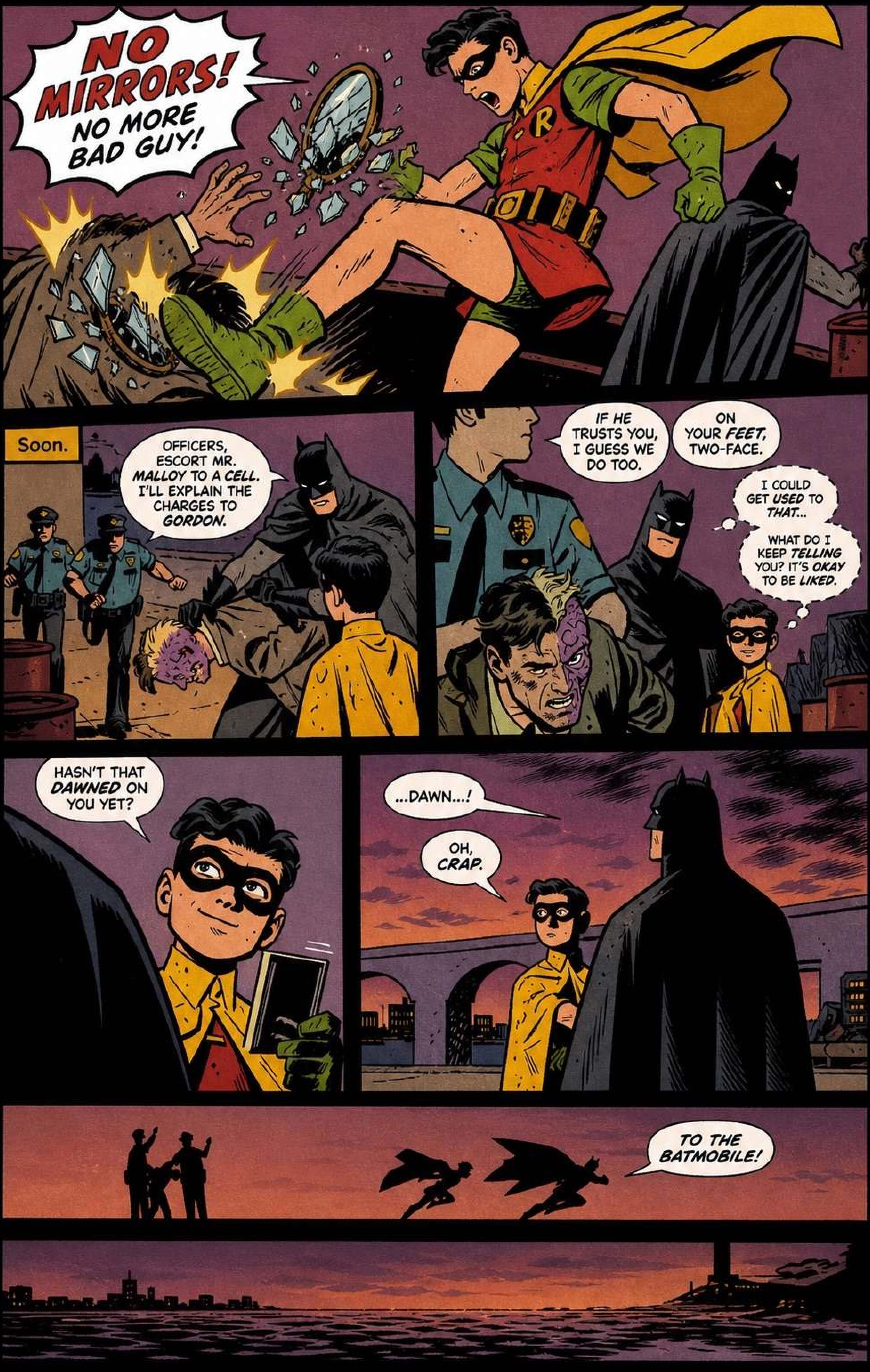

YOU PUNCH CRIMINALS.
I REMOVE THE REASON THEY EXIST.
THIS CITY IS A LIE, BATMAN.
BUILT ON TRAUMA.
FUELED BY FEAR.
MAINTAINED BY DENIAL.
AND I SEE EVERY PART OF IT.
ALL AT ONCE.
BUT EVEN AN ILLUSION...
...HAS A CRACK.
NATURE. RAW. UNFILTERED. UNCONFLICTED. OUTSIDE HIS DOMAIN.
HIS WEAKNESS: BEYOND GOTHAM. BEYOND THE METAL. BEYOND THE SYSTEM.
THERE, HE IS NOTHING.
THERE, HE IS JUST A MAN TRAPPED IN HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE.
YOU FIGHT ME...
...IN THE ONE PLACE I AM EVERYTHING.
STEP OUTSIDE THE ILLUSION...
...AND YOU MIGHT SURVIVE.
BUT AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE...
I WILL ALWAYS WIN.
BECAUSE GOTHAM IS MINE TO COMPREHEND.
AND YOU ARE MINE TO BREAK.

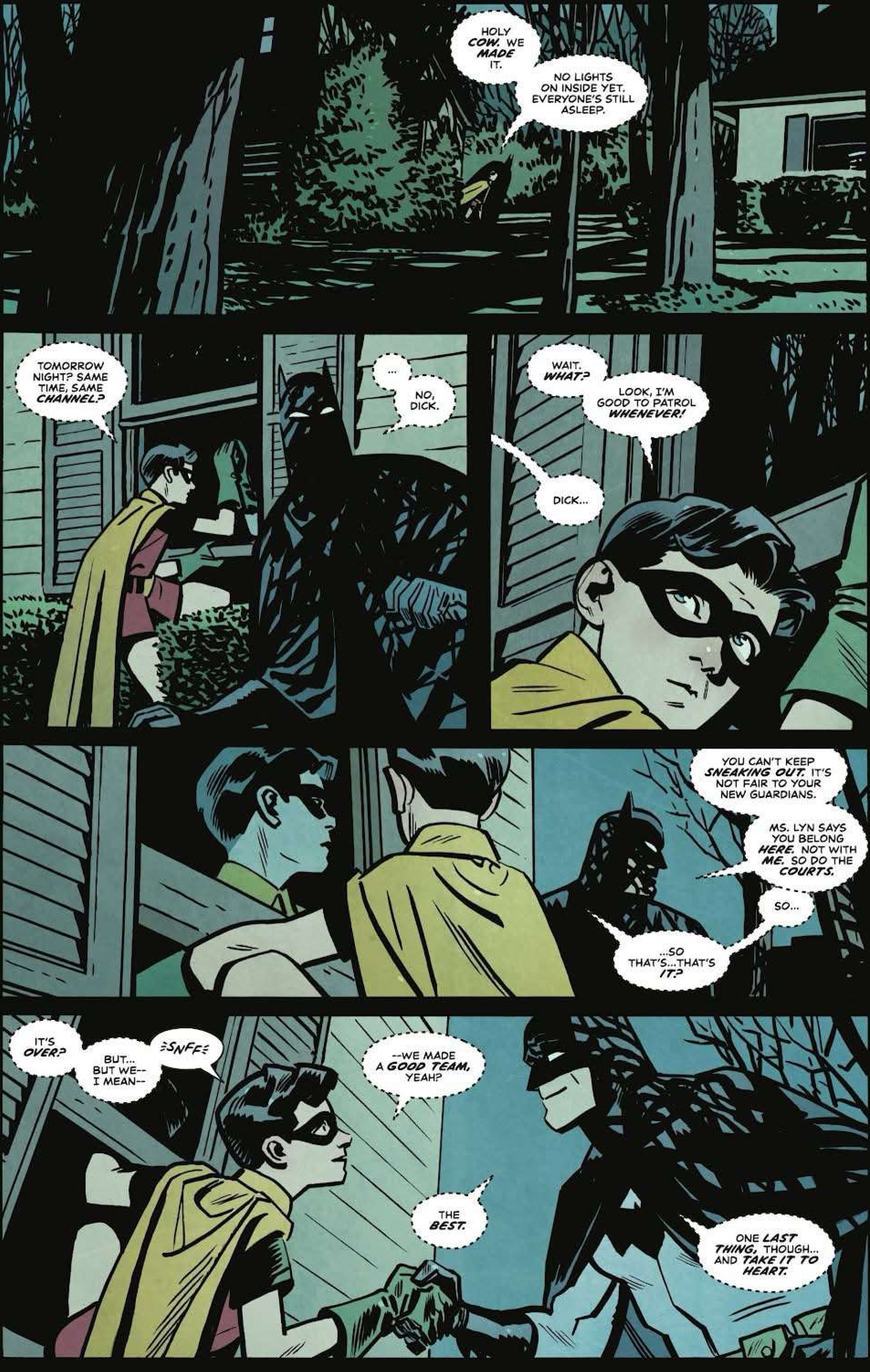

THE MIRROR
TEMPTATION PROTOCOL: ACTIVATED.
YOU STILL THINK THIS IS A FIGHT.
THIS IS WHERE YOU WERE MADE.
YOU BUILD MASKS... BECAUSE YOU CANNOT HOLD ANYTHING REAL.
LET KNOWLEDGE MAKE YOU SOMETHING GREATER.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU STOP PRETENDING.
NO!
THAT'S NOT ME!
YOU'RE ALREADY HIM.
YOU JUST HAVEN'T ADMITTED IT.

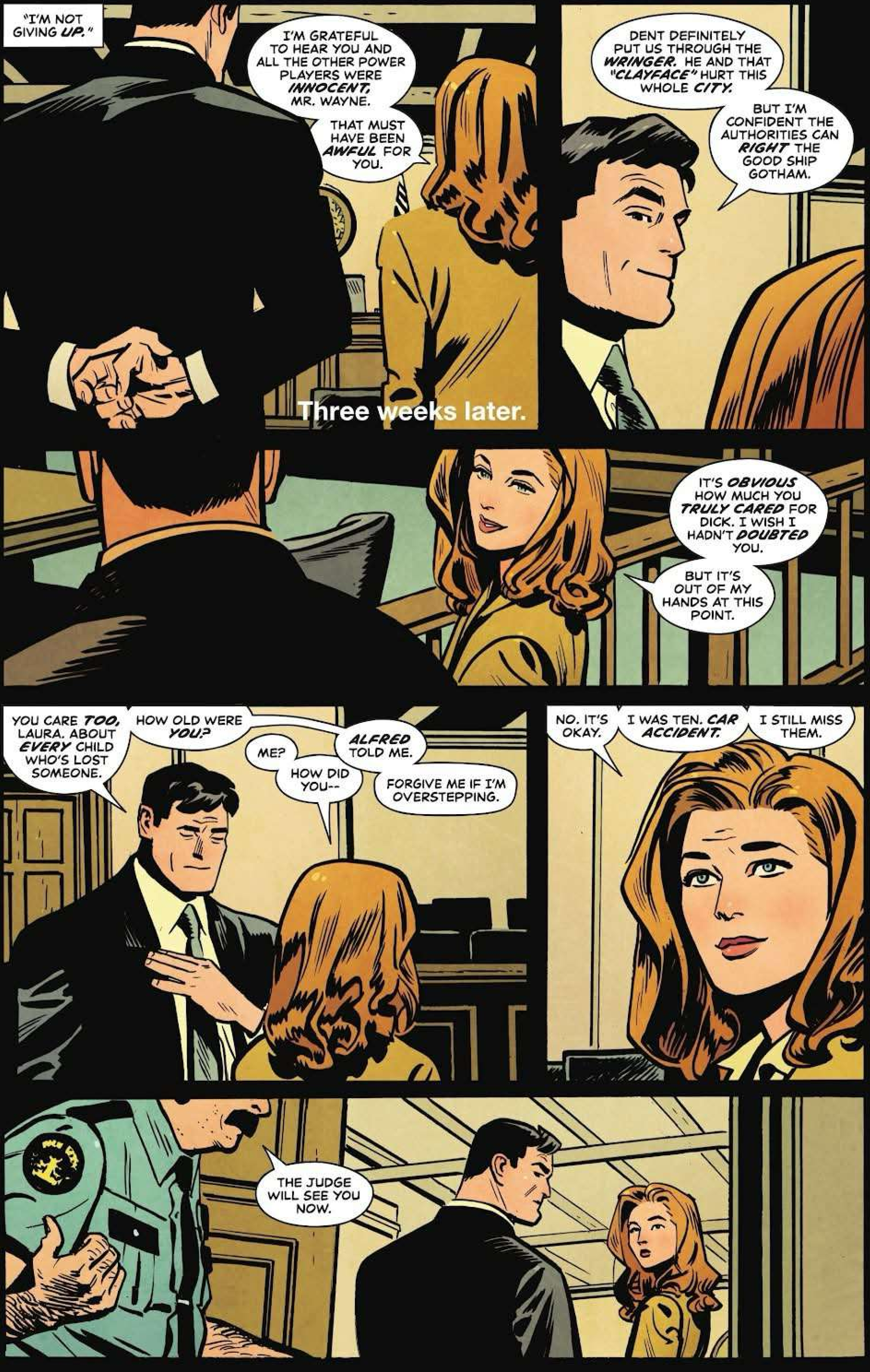

YOU SEE EVERYTHING...
MY FLAWS... MY MISTAKES... EVEN THE MASK.
BUT YOU STILL DON'T SEE THE ONE THING THAT MATTERS.
THE HEART.

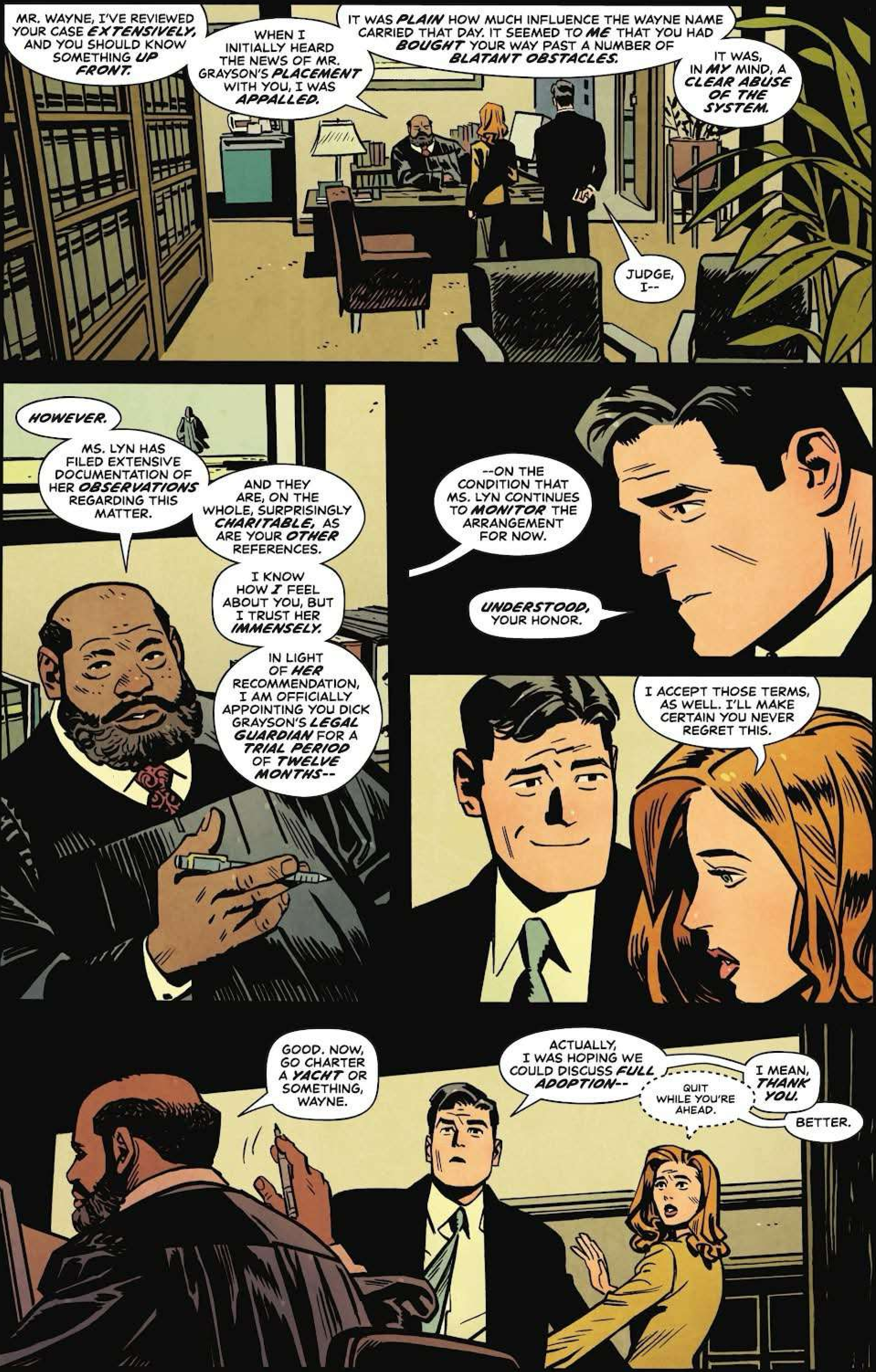
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

YOU'RE NOT GOTHAM CITY'S SOLUTION.
YOU'RE NOT A GOD.
YOU'RE A MAN...
...DESPERATE...
...TO ESCAPE YOURSELF.
AND I'M ENDING THIS... ONCE AND FOR ALL.

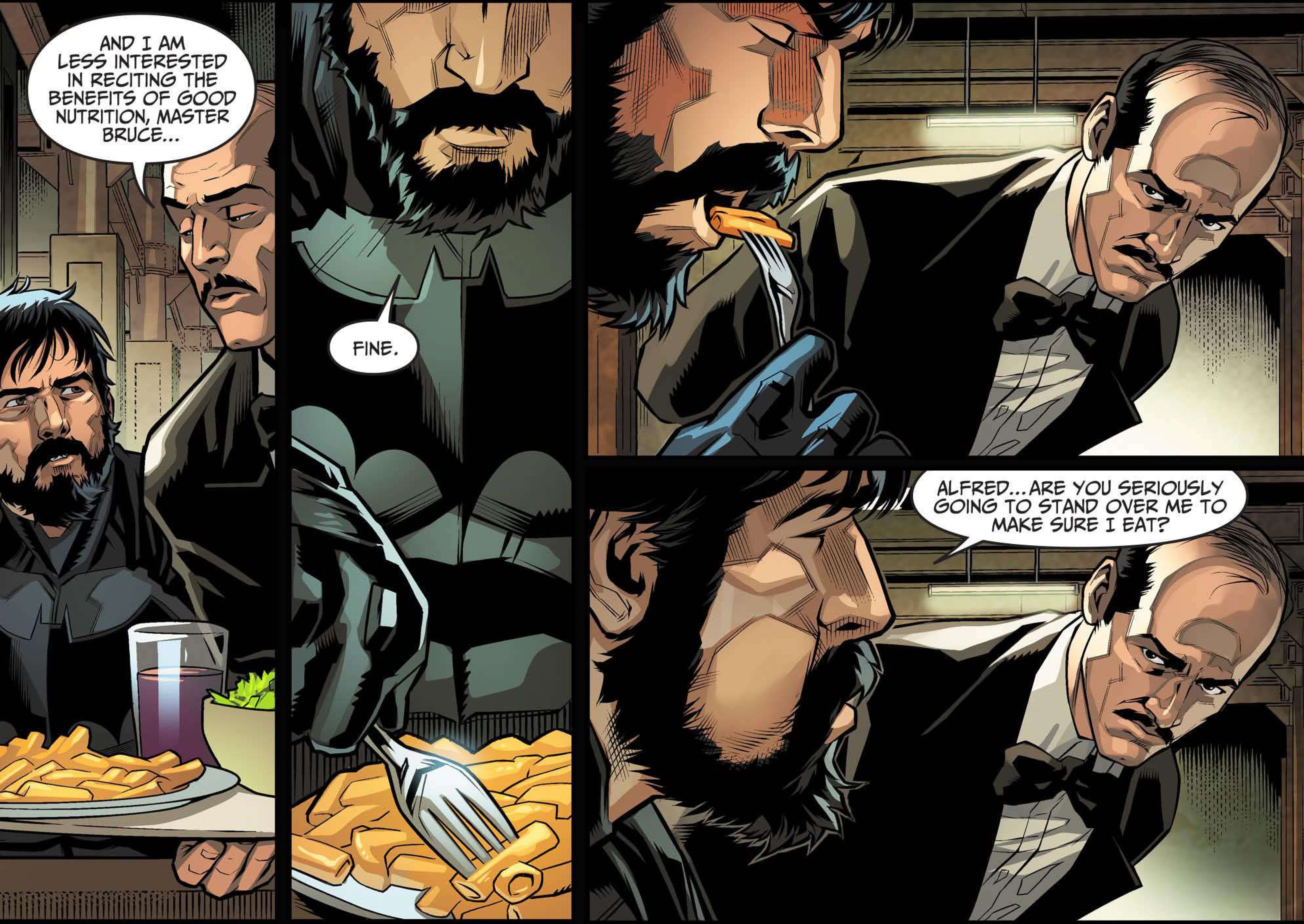

NO MIRRORS! NO MORE BAD GUY!
Soon.
OFFICERS, ESCORT MR. MALLOY TO A CELL. I'LL EXPLAIN THE CHARGES TO GORDON.
IF HE TRUSTS YOU, I GUESS WE DO TOO.
ON YOUR FEET, TWO-FACE.
I COULD GET USED TO THAT...
WHAT DO I KEEP TELLING YOU? IT'S OKAY TO BE LIKED.
HASN'T THAT DAWNED ON YOU YET?
...DAWN...!
OH, CRAP.
TO THE BATMOBILE!

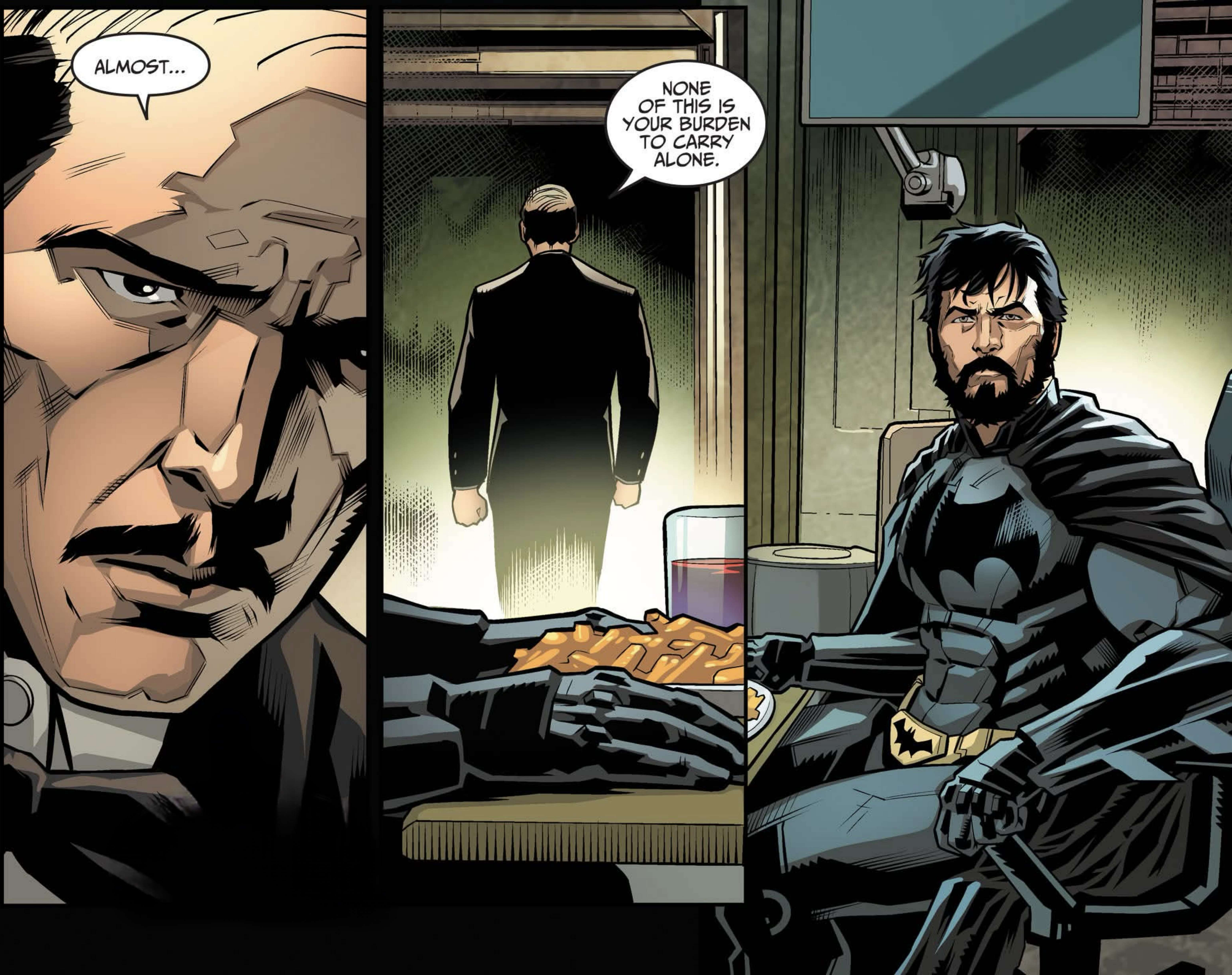

HOLY *COW.* WE *MADE* IT.
NO LIGHTS ON INSIDE YET. EVERYONE'S STILL ASLEEP.
TOMORROW NIGHT? SAME TIME, SAME *CHANNEL?*
...
NO, DICK.
WAIT. *WHAT?*
LOOK, I'M GOOD TO PATROL *WHENEVER!*
DICK...
YOU CAN'T KEEP *SNEAKING OUT.* IT'S NOT FAIR TO YOUR NEW GUARDIANS.
MS. LYN SAYS YOU BELONG *HERE.* NOT WITH *ME.* SO DO THE *COURTS.*
SO...
...SO THAT'S...THAT'S *IT?*
IT'S *OVER?*
BUT... BUT WE-- I MEAN--
SNFF
--WE MADE A *GOOD TEAM,* YEAH?
THE *BEST.*
ONE *LAST THING,* THOUGH... AND *TAKE IT TO HEART.*

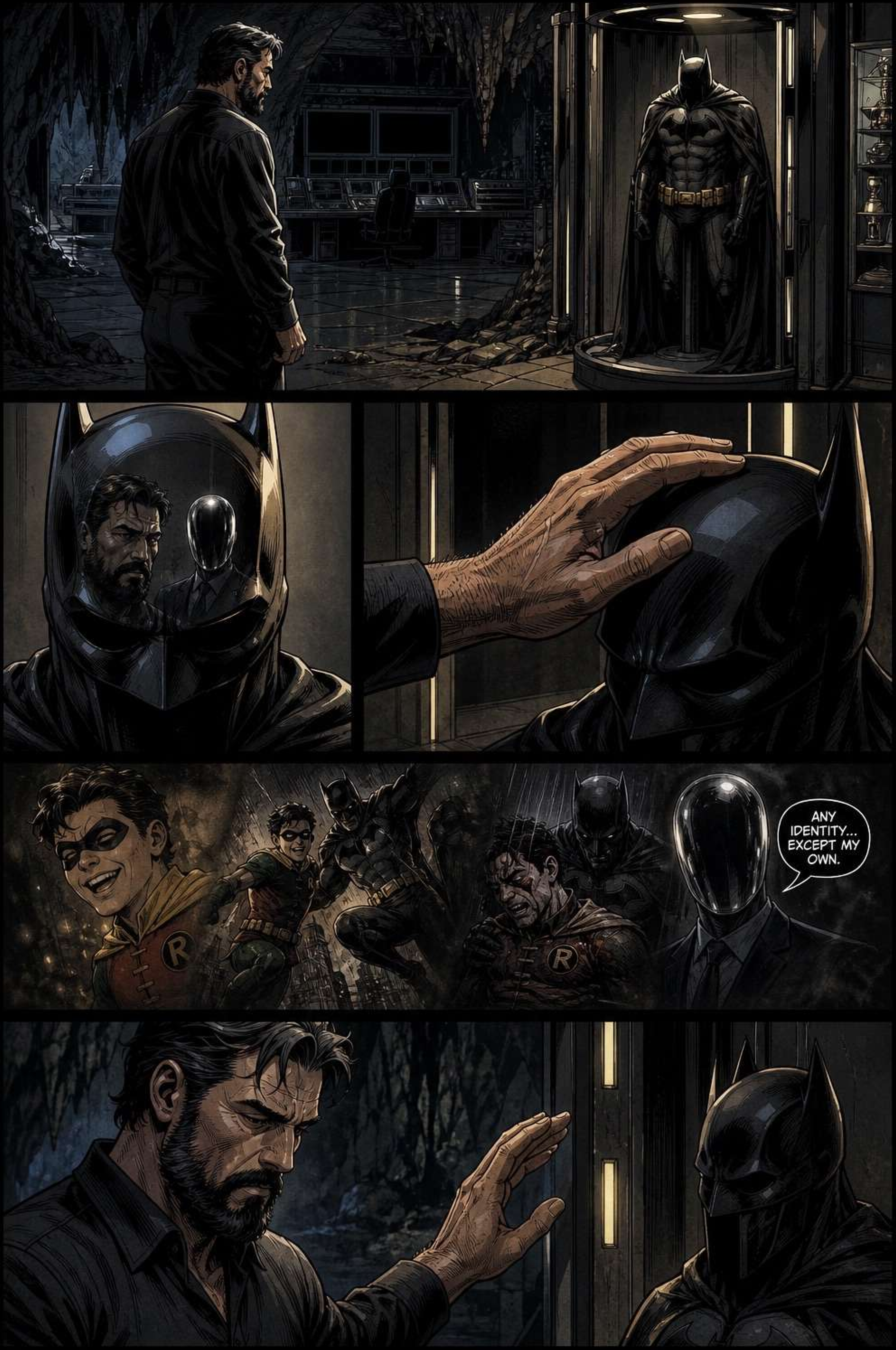

"I'M NOT GIVING *UP.*"
I'M GRATEFUL TO HEAR YOU AND ALL THE OTHER POWER PLAYERS WERE *INNOCENT,* MR. WAYNE.
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN *AWFUL* FOR YOU.
DENT DEFINITELY PUT US THROUGH THE *WRINGER.* HE AND THAT *"CLAYFACE"* HURT THIS WHOLE *CITY.*
BUT I'M CONFIDENT THE AUTHORITIES CAN *RIGHT* THE GOOD SHIP GOTHAM.
Three weeks later.
IT'S *OBVIOUS* HOW MUCH YOU *TRULY CARED* FOR DICK. I WISH I HADN'T *DOUBTED* YOU.
BUT IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS AT THIS POINT.
YOU CARE *TOO,* LAURA. ABOUT *EVERY* CHILD WHO'S LOST SOMEONE.
HOW OLD WERE *YOU?*
ME?
HOW DID YOU--
ALFRED TOLD ME.
FORGIVE ME IF I'M OVERSTEPPING.
NO. IT'S OKAY.
I WAS TEN. *CAR ACCIDENT.*
I STILL MISS THEM.
THE JUDGE WILL SEE YOU NOW.

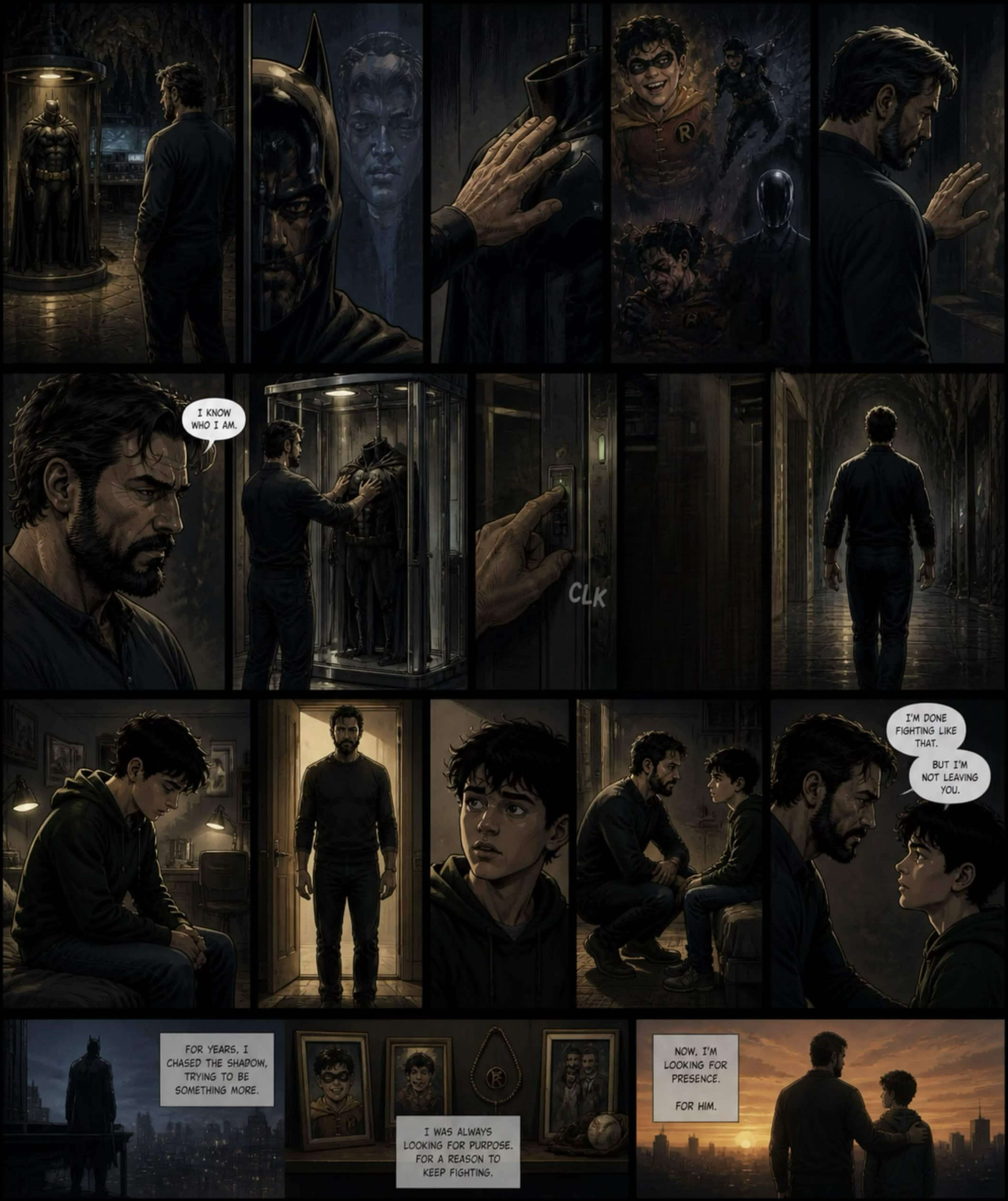

MR. WAYNE, I'VE REVIEWED YOUR CASE *EXTENSIVELY*, AND YOU SHOULD KNOW SOMETHING *UP FRONT*.
WHEN I INITIALLY HEARD THE NEWS OF MR. GRAYSON'S *PLACEMENT* WITH YOU, I WAS *APPALLED*.
IT WAS *PLAIN* HOW MUCH INFLUENCE THE WAYNE NAME CARRIED THAT DAY. IT SEEMED TO *ME* THAT YOU HAD *BOUGHT* YOUR WAY PAST A NUMBER OF *BLATANT OBSTACLES*.
IT WAS, IN *MY* MIND, A *CLEAR ABUSE OF THE SYSTEM*.
JUDGE, I--
HOWEVER.
MS. LYN HAS FILED EXTENSIVE DOCUMENTATION OF HER *OBSERVATIONS* REGARDING THIS MATTER.
AND THEY ARE, ON THE WHOLE, SURPRISINGLY *CHARITABLE*, AS ARE YOUR *OTHER* REFERENCES.
I KNOW HOW *I* FEEL ABOUT YOU, BUT I TRUST HER *IMMENSELY*.
IN LIGHT OF *HER* RECOMMENDATION, I AM OFFICIALLY APPOINTING YOU DICK GRAYSON'S *LEGAL GUARDIAN* FOR A *TRIAL PERIOD* OF *TWELVE MONTHS*--
--ON THE CONDITION THAT MS. LYN CONTINUES TO *MONITOR* THE ARRANGEMENT FOR NOW.
UNDERSTOOD, YOUR HONOR.
I ACCEPT THOSE TERMS, AS WELL. I'LL MAKE CERTAIN YOU NEVER REGRET THIS.
GOOD. NOW, GO CHARTER A *YACHT* OR SOMETHING, WAYNE.
ACTUALLY, I WAS HOPING WE COULD DISCUSS *FULL ADOPTION*--
QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD.
I MEAN, *THANK YOU*.
BETTER.

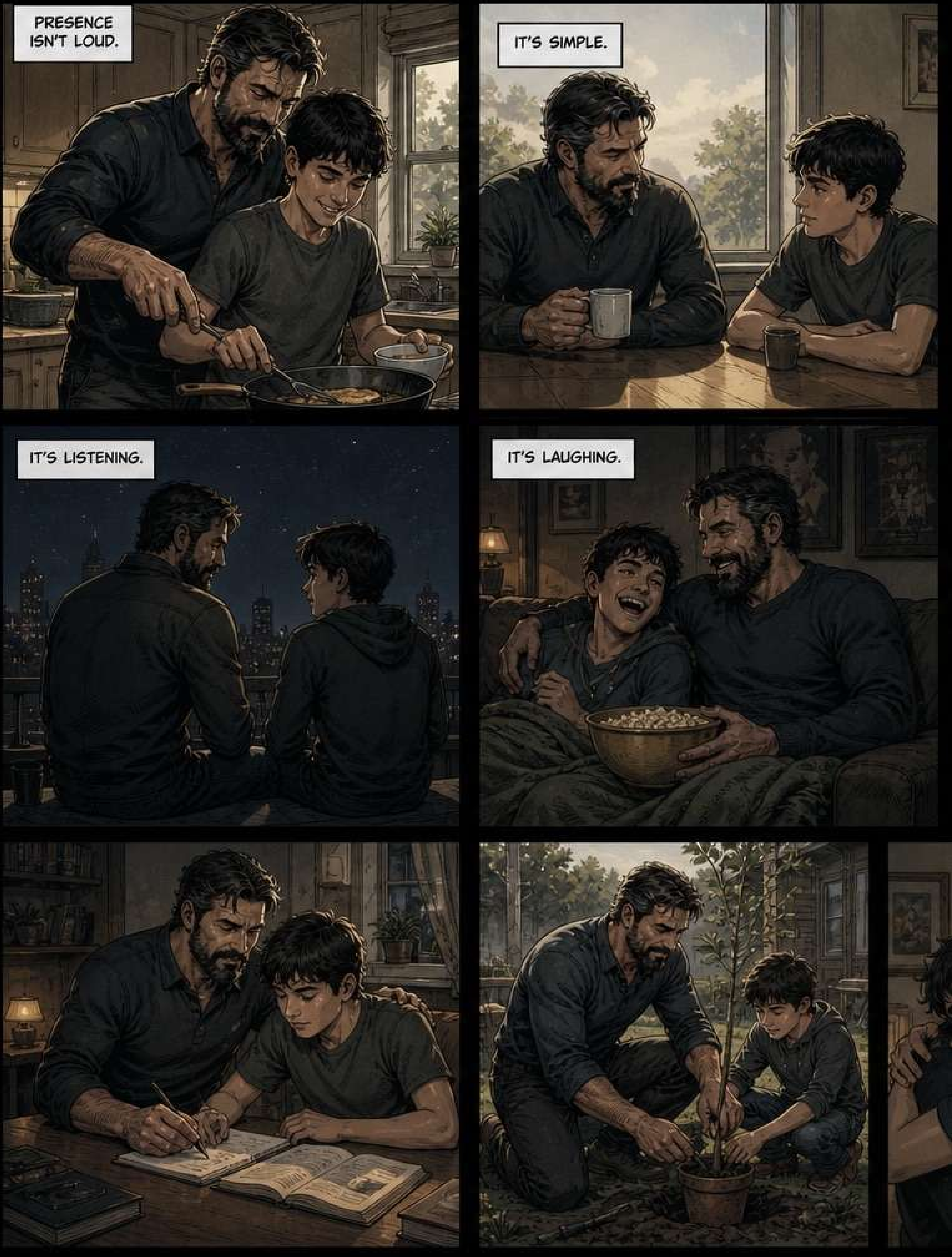
YEARS LATER ...
"SIR, AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING RIDICULOUS...
...ARE YOU AWARE THAT THOSE SCREENS ARE BLANK?
YES, ALFRED. I JUST TURNED THEM OFF.
EXCELLENT. THEN THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO TAKE A MEAL.
THANK YOU, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED IN EATING--

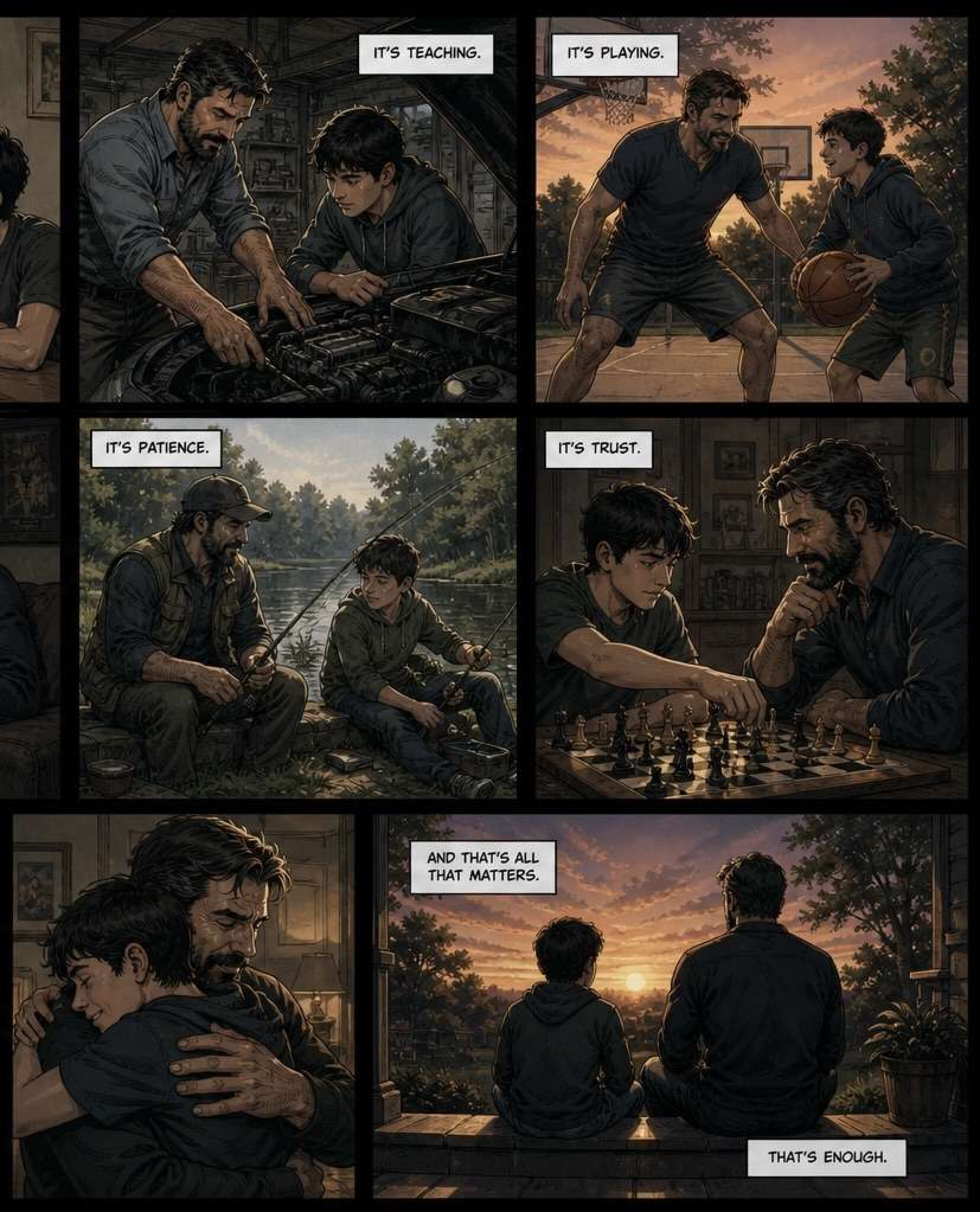

AND I AM LESS INTERESTED IN RECITING THE BENEFITS OF GOOD NUTRITION, MASTER BRUCE...
FINE.
ALFRED...ARE YOU SERIOUSLY GOING TO STAND OVER ME TO MAKE SURE I EAT?


ALMOST...
NONE OF THIS IS YOUR BURDEN TO CARRY ALONE.


ANY IDENTITY... EXCEPT MY OWN.


I KNOW WHO I AM.
CLK
I'M DONE FIGHTING LIKE THAT.
BUT I'M NOT LEAVING YOU.
FOR YEARS, I CHASED THE SHADOW, TRYING TO BE SOMETHING MORE.
I WAS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR PURPOSE. FOR A REASON TO KEEP FIGHTING.
NOW, I'M LOOKING FOR PRESENCE.
FOR HIM.


PRESENCE ISN'T LOUD.
IT'S SIMPLE.
IT'S LISTENING.
IT'S LAUGHING.


IT'S TEACHING.
IT'S PLAYING.
IT'S PATIENCE.
IT'S TRUST.
AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
THAT'S ENOUGH.